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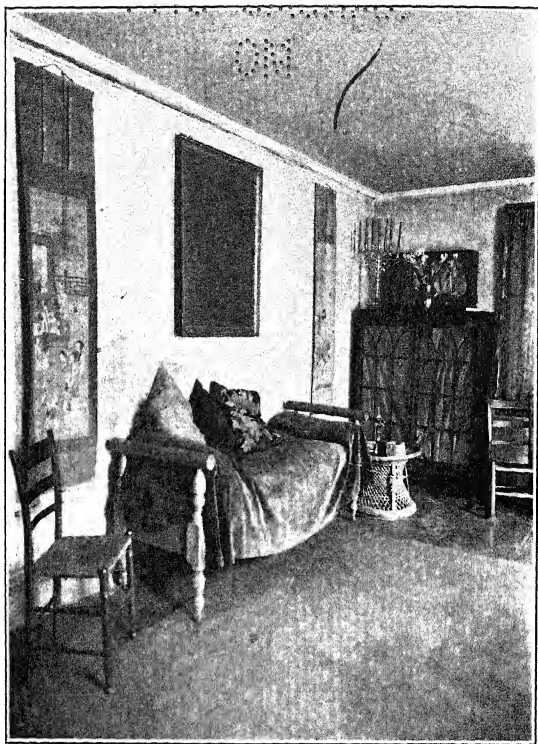


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*When we have really good examples of handmade furniture, Colonial or otherwise, we do not need so very many pieces of it in one room. As each piece in itself is architecturally beautiful it counts for more and is more easily arranged in harmonious groups.*

# EVERYDAY ART

BY

AMI MALI HICKS

AUTHOR OF "CRAFT OF HANDMADE RUGS," ETC.



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DEDICATED  
TO  
THOSE WHO BUILD

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“There was no worth in the fashion—there was no wit in the plan—  
Hither and thither, aimless, the ruined footings ran—  
Masonry, brute, mishandled, but carven on every stone:  
*‘After me cometh a Builder. Tell him, I too have known.’ ”*



## FOREWORD



THE vital need today for "Everyday Art" is to show the value of art to those who know little and care less about what they think of as art.

Senseless and horrible crimes particularly of youth are mostly accounted for by, "I did it for excitement," "to get a thrill." They are all in search of experience.

Those who find themselves unable to get amusement or stimulants for their minds or feelings out of ordinary circumstances seek the dangerous, the unusual, or the wicked. When people cannot be social, they become unsocial; when they do not know how to be constructive, they become destructive.

If the feelings and perceptions of people are not stirred, nothing will hold their interest; so that when gambling, horse racing, drinking and ordinary dissipations fail, emotional and intellectual individuals are driven to seek "strange sins" and abnormal and fantastic crimes.

It is necessary, therefore, to arouse in every one of us an intense interest in the common things of life which surround us every day and all the time, so that we may see the beauty and possibility in these everyday things and occurrences.





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# **EVERYDAY ART**





# EVERYDAY ART

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## CHAPTER I

### HATS, HEAD-DRESSES, AND HAIR-DRESSING



NOWADAYS, for us who wish to look distinguished, dressing is more of a problem than the selection of smart or modish hats and gowns. Modes change, like weather in New York City, but if we once achieve a style which becomes us and sets off our individuality it will endure—as long as we are satisfied with it. I once said to a friend, “You do not wear becoming hats.” She returned, “It is not the fault of my hats; they are good, as hats go; but some days I have no luck with my face. Very often I wake up with a new face. I cannot possibly afford to buy a hat as often as that.” I suggested designing a head-dress and wearing that instead of a hat, for I was sure we could get something in a head-dress which conformed, more than the average hat, to the shape of her head and the outline of her face.

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The great milliners and dressmakers, who are really artists, are quite used to sizing up the possibilities of each personality coming to their establishments. They try to sell the special gown or hat to set it off. If some customers insist on getting the wrong thing, saleswomen cannot be blamed. They must make sales to earn their living. They see that "Madame" wants to be told that she can make any hat look beautiful. Most of us depend on the hat or head-dress to add a note of distinction to our costumes. Therefore, it must be chosen with great discretion.

It is not wise to choose a hat because it looks well on someone else—perhaps to go into a hat shop and order one like Mrs. Hunting Westbury's because we know her to be a modishly smart person. It is also a mistake to think that a becoming color scheme will carry off a burden of misplaced architecture; to say to a milliner, "I want that hat copied in blue; brown is not my color." Merely changing the color of a hat will not make it suit the outline of the face or the shape of the head.

In looking around public conveyances and noting the unbecoming hats of people sitting about, we are often tempted to go around with a pair of pruning shears. We see a woman with prominent features, surmounted by a hat of fine flowers, probably forget-me-nots, suited only for the bonnet of an infant. Or there is a large-faced lady with her hair drawn tightly back, wearing a small hat with a round crown

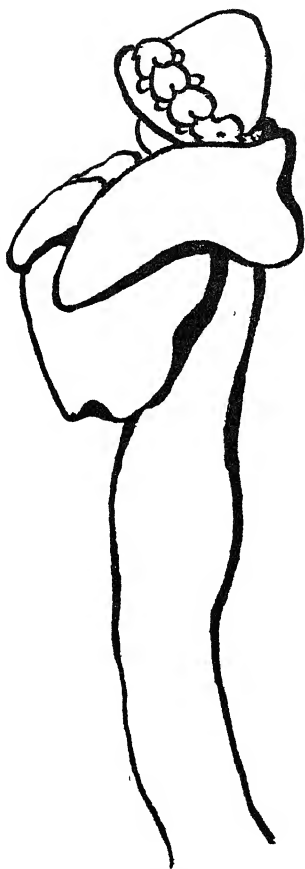
## Hats and Head-dresses

perched upon the top of her coiffure. Artists might make a law against any woman past forty wearing a hat with a round crown. The cartoonist draws a little man with a big head. A little woman smothered under a big hat is just as ridiculous, unless, like the cartoonist, she has an idea to express.

When the architecture of a face becomes too pronounced and the smoothness of its outline broken, the time has come to choose hats or head-dresses with unusual care. Nothing, for instance, is as disconcerting to the middle aged as natural ostrich feathers which have the effect of unkempt and uncurled hair. A sympathetic surrounding of soft laces is usually sufficient. The problem is harder for the middle aged than for anyone else. Youth has few problems in regard to looks, and in old age the character in the face counts more than the externals. Severe lines are not any more becoming to the old than they are to the extremely young. Imagine how an infant would look in a stiff sailor hat, the shape which dates from the time of Charles Dickens. Cruikshank used it in illustrations of Dickens' books, but it has not been worn since by any sea-faring person.

The key to the proper scale for the trimming on a hat is the size and type of the features. The trimming on most hats seems to have been planted without any reference to the face of the wearer. One sees a formal-looking woman with severe features, and a still severer expression, wearing a trans-

## Everyday Art



*This is not the  
face to wear with  
bobbed hair.*

*And now "this inverted  
bowl" we call "a hat  
—a hat."*



*A hat like this costs  
a lot of money but  
not much else.*

## Hats and Head-dresses

parent lace hat which fully displays both expression and features. Sometimes a hat is even decorated with a wreath of rambling roses, giving the effect of a camp bungalow in an old Italian garden.

In getting effects, everything counts as part of the effect—absolutely everything, shape, color, size, and style. These alter our apparent height, size, slenderness, and contour. We may be tall enough to wear a large picture hat if it is a dark hat, but a large, light-colored hat may make us look too tall, the effect of the light color being to raise up the head. Or perhaps the trimming on the hat has perpendicular lines producing an upstanding effect. This would also make us look taller. The same hat trimmed with outspreading or horizontal lines might be in better proportion to the head and figure. Sometimes a tall person has some defect in proportion, which can be remedied by wearing a certain kind of hat. Perhaps a medium-sized picture hat would look well because it does not cut off the line of the entire figure by the width of the brim. A hat with an extreme brim might reduce the height too much.

When we look at people we do not look only at their heads. We see them as a whole. And when they dress so as to have a continuity of outline, mass, and color, in their costumes, their appearance is much more distinctive and successful. Sometimes we might be wearing a becoming hat and even a becoming gown or cloak, but the cloak and the hat



*An archaic Grecian head-dress harmonizing with the costume of that period.*



*The same wimple used by religious orders was developed from the medieval head-dress, tenth century.*



*Head-dress used with a costume characteristic of the latter half of the fifteenth century.*

## Hats and Head-dresses

might not harmonize. When people look at us, they do not analyze what is the matter with our clothes and ourselves, but they feel a kind of discomfort which does not make us attractive to them. People do not always sense harmony and beauty consciously, but it always has an effect upon them.

It is extremely difficult to analyze all the details which will throw a costume and head-dress, or hat, out of relation. And it is just as impossible to foresee the kind of mistakes that people are going to make. But there are artistic principles which, when understood, will help out in almost any situation and we can learn them only by examples. For instance, perhaps one has too short a neck and is wearing a large, heavily trimmed hat down over the face which reduces the size of the face and makes both the face and neck look shorter. People with short necks look better with hats raised off their faces and hats with trimming which has an upward trend. Sometimes, relatively short persons can wear moderately large hats because they have long and slender necks which detach the head from the shoulders. The shoulders themselves have much to do with the kind of hats and hair-dresses we can wear. A person with sloping shoulders looks better in a hat with drooping lines than a person with square shoulders. Square shoulders look better with a hat worn off the face or with a hat with a stiff brim like a "sailor."

Some people look really better in hats than without them because they have some defect in the shape

## Everyday Art

or proportion of their heads. When the shape of the head is good, a head-dress is more becoming than a hat. The difference between a hat and a head-dress is that the head-dress is more carefully designed to suit the shape of the head. Its ornaments are developed from its construction. It is not trimmed afterward, as is a hat. Besides this, the style of all head-dresses should correspond exactly to the style of a costume. It carries out its characteristics in structure and in detail. A head-dress in a classical costume is an intrinsic part of the costume and its decorative climax. We would not ask a Roman lady to take off her head-dress, but we wish very often that people would take off their hats, especially as the average hat has a tendency to cut the head into two sections. In the modern way of wearing a hat, half the face is often invisible.

In looking over books of historical costumes, we find that the head-dress is always an important and interesting part of the costume. Perhaps it is even the part which adds most to its distinctiveness. It is the keynote of the costume and confirms its character and style. Anyone caring for pure style in historical costumes would as soon think of leaving out the head-dress of that style as of hiding the head of the individual who is to wear it. Hardly any historical or classical costumes are worn without a head-dress. One cannot picture a Grecian costume without a Grecian head-dress, or a medieval costume lacking a medieval head-dress. These head-dresses



## Hats and Head-dresses

were always designed to fit the shape of the head and to harmonize with the lines of the costume. Even the manner of wearing the hair is as exactly characteristic as the head-dress.

Though we cannot always wear classical costumes with head-dresses to match them, we can get many ideas from them for the treatment of hats, especially the idea that modern hats and head-dresses must connect up in some way with our costumes and with the style and manner of wearing our hair. In the coloring of birds and animals there are many suggestions for distinctive head-dresses, particularly in the decorative head markings of birds.

When we think what a hat can do to us, we realize how important it is to use care in its selection. Think of the pictures or photographs of people immortalized with their hats on. We are tempted to exclaim, "What a perfectly awful hat!"—the hat which in its day had possibly been the very latest thing in modes and everybody who counted in a social way had one as near like it as possible! Very few modish hats of the past would stand comparison with the head-dresses of the historical periods. They have not beauty enough to make us wish that any of their passing modes might be made into a national costume. Nowadays we try all kinds of experiments and the milliners encourage us. Our ancestors seem to have been more conservative. Of course, we don't know how many experiments they tried before they developed a "style of the period."

## Everyday Art

We wonder that professional beauties have the courage to publish their hats in connection with their autobiographies. Nothing is more age-telling than a hat of ancient vintage. Picture hats are an exception to this rule and look well in the modes of all periods. They act as a frame for the face and as a background immediately surrounding the face, detaching it from a number of confusing objects. A cloak as a background for the figure which is thrown out in silhouette against it, may have the same effect. In medieval costumes a close-fitting jerkin was worn with a pair of trunks and tights, and the costume silhouetted itself against the cape worn with it, adding continuity and distinction. The medieval wimple was possibly invented by some middle-aged princess to conceal the broken lines of her face and neck. A wimple is a face-binding which has survived to modern times by being worn by nuns. It completely covers the neck and surrounds the chin and cheeks. It is almost universally becoming because it frames in the face and acts as a background for it. Its lines fall against the face in such a manner as to set it off as a complete oval.

The same principles which apply to the wearing and trimming of hats apply to fashions for the hair. The fashion of bobbed hair has shown many of us just how old or just how young we can look. We have to lay our cards on the table when we bob our hair. Anyone who has smallish features, an up-turned nose, the ingenue type of face, other things

## Hats and Head-dresses

being equal, may look well in bobbed hair. But alas for the person with an architectural face, the same type which needs the softening influence of gentle frills! For her bobbed hair is about as becoming as a sailor hat, and for the same reason. The lines are too severe and show up every defect of the face, head and neck. But here again there is no room for arbitrariness in matters of taste in hair cuts. Just cutting off our hair may free us in some other respect.

Bobbed hair has the effect of concealing a well-shaped head. Usually, the line of the hair cut comes just below the ears and is below the line of the head where it curves into the neck. Short hair is really more becoming than bobbed hair because it shows the shape of the back head. It is a pity to conceal a good back head. One of the most distinguished women I ever saw was a frankly elderly person with aquiline features and snow-white hair cut very short. But her hair was cropped—it wasn't bobbed, which is quite different. (Most men cut their hair short, but few of them, I think, would have the courage to bob their hair.)

If the shape of the head were perfect, we could even stand having the hair shaved off, as in the portrait of the "Unknown lady of the Louvre." But usually the arrangement of the hair will overcome real defects in features, or in outline of the face, or shape of the head. We cannot imagine anybody but a perfect beauty wearing her hair pulled straight

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off the forehead, after the manner of some French or Spanish models.

Perhaps the best summing up of advice about dressing your face and dressing your hair is, to be as individual as you can without being erratic. Your face is not like anyone else's unless you are twins. Why should you standardize it by some modish freak? You can work out some style which is becoming, and you are much more apt to be successful if you have an expert hair-dresser experiment with several arrangements. Then you can modify them to suit your needs. You may be like the man who got his teeth by mail. You may need more hair. You can get it.

Almost any hair ornament is unbecoming unless carefully selected and carefully arranged. It is dangerous to add anything to the shape of your head without knowing just what to add. A bow, a flower, or a comb has to be treated with great taste to be successful. In some way they are apt to look sentimental or pre-Victorian in effect. Or, to put it frankly, they seem kittenish. Of course, we are again talking about the person who has problems and who is not easily arranged. No one worries about a beautiful face, except perhaps the owner, when it begins to grow old. But that, too, is unnecessary, for any face as it changes may be as beautiful as before if it only matures instead of ages.

If only some good fairy would give us a mirror

## Hats and Head-dresses

to see ourselves—not as others see us (for no two people see us alike), but as we would like to be seen—a magic mirror that would hold a vision for us to follow. This makes me think of what William M. Chase once said to me about painting portraits. “I first try,” he said, “to find out which member of the family the portrait must please, and then I set out to find out what that person thinks my sitter looks like. Then I start to paint my portrait.”

## CHAPTER II

### COSTUMES, DRESSES, OR JUST CLOTHES



**D**ISTINCTION, to exist in the form and fashion of our dress, must be something fundamentally individual and not merely the latest thing in modes. The race of changing fashions results in pushing the extremist to ever newer invention. The fashion magazines travel nowadays quickly into the farthest corners of the earth and their styles are so immediately copied that the exclusive models today become common property tomorrow.

Good dressing is to get the costume which suits each individuality in silhouette and in color. Then if it is modified to the prevailing mode by adding some significant detail, it will show a knowledge of what is being worn. If we succeed in expressing our personalities in matters of dress, we get distinction: if we do it harmoniously and suitably, we add charm. The actor needs his costume to finish his part. Ordinary clothes help to make people ordinary: distinctive gowns make distinctive women. If we want to be brilliant or sympathetic, we must

## Costumes or Just Clothes

dress the part. We are not doing so well as we could unless we dress as well as we can.

We must acknowledge that we dress badly—that is to say, we dress inappropriately. The purpose for which we dress is most important and to a degree modifies our criticism of individual standards. For instance, nothing in the world seems as universally ugly and inappropriate as the clothes of the average man. Yet he will tell you that his clothes are convenient and will support his argument lengthily. It needs argument to show that it is convenient to be too hot in summer by wearing layers of inappropriate clothes! One sincerely wishes that for all kinds of work men would wear overalls and shirts. They could wear soft collars and vary the menu with shirts made of silk, linen, or cotton, in becoming colors. Also, the patterns of the overalls could be modified; loose trousers with waistbands or sashes are more trouble to arrange, but they give variety.

Imagination is sadly lacking in the motif of a man's costume. It seems to have derived its inspiration from a stovepipe, beginning confessedly at the hat and continuing in successive stove motifs to the arms and legs—clothes which neither drape nor dress the form. With shirts and overalls for a starter, color schemes would develop by combining, harmonizing and contrasting colors in shirts and trousers. For winter, instead of the dismal overcoat, bright-colored capes of velvet or wool could be used. This is not so revolutionary as it seems. It

## Everyday Art

is merely a throw-back to an older historical convention. And very graceful and beautiful capes are still worn in our own navy and in the armies of some foreign countries.

When men and women have considered the purpose for which their clothes are used, they are well



*Little boy of 1843; the only human thing about him is his hoop.*



*Little girl of 1843: and then we say that the world makes no progress.*

dressed, whether in their overall work suits or in their golf and sport play suits. When women have copied men's dress for work, they have not been successful in their office suits. Some few women, however, do look well in overalls. The shirt-waist suit, which seems convenient, is the most difficult dress to wear. In the first place, it has to be up to



## Costumes or Just Clothes

date, spotlessly clean, and properly laundered. And withal, nothing is so universally unbecoming. Women, because of the more definite shape of their hips, do not look well when their figures are cut in two at the waist-line. Some women with the straight, boyish or mannish figure can carry off being cut into two halves. But the interruption in line wrongly emphasizes the figures of most women. Lately, there seems to be a more liberal tendency in dress for women who work in offices and out of their own homes. Their clothes may not be more appropriate, but, at least, they are more becoming.

People should be studied as a problem in design. Their good points must be carefully emphasized, their defects modified or concealed. You may remember the portrait of Titian's daughter, who with uplifted arms carries a dish of fruit. Hanging from her neck and concealing the line of her back and shoulders is a hooded cape. The story goes that she was a hunchback and that Titian designed this costume to hide her physical defects. There are many ways to conceal the defects of too stout or too slim a figure. Those inclined to be stout should have their costumes designed on vertical lines, or lines which run lengthwise to the figure. This will emphasize and add height. Costumes designed on horizontal lines, or lines that cross the height of the figure at right angles will take away from its length. So by not taking thought, one can easily subtract from one's stature.

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Vertical lines, on the contrary, should not be emphasized in the costumes for tall, slim people. For people with long faces and necks, square-cut bodices usually look better and are more becoming than V-necks. These are merely generalizations and are given to call attention to certain points so that we may become accustomed to observe the appearance of people; then we will see for ourselves that each one of us is an exception to any general rule, and that to be successfully gowned each must be individually considered.

All these principles should be applied to men's clothes even more than to women's; because our men give far too little attention to art in dress.

Those of us who depend on the ready-made have to select with care in a field which is restricted. Much choice, or much chance to express ourselves through selection is not possible. The standardizing necessary for commercial reproduction limits our choice, and though we may see many good ready-made clothes, we realize that costumes would look ever so much better if individually made. We may say that very few people show individual distinction. That is true only because they have not yet begun to make their clothes a part of their own personality. Yet clothes are means which most of us could use for self-expression if we gave the matter a little thought. There are some individuals who really cannot wear ready-made clothes without expensive alteration. Others think they can.

'Another point to be emphasized in good dressing

## Costumes or Just Clothes

is the size of the detail used on costumes and gowns. Technically, this is what the artists call "scale," and what a good interior decorator has to consider carefully in house furnishing. For example, any careful furnisher of a room would first consider its proportions before selecting the scale of the furniture to be used. Unless for the sake of quaintness, a very small chair in a room of large proportions looks as much out of scale as a very large chair in a very small room. What is true of rooms is true of costumes and the scale of ornament used on hats and gowns. It is also true of the scale on which people themselves are built. People with large features can wear large and showy ornaments. People with fine and delicate features should wear ornaments of a smaller size and reduced scale. One cannot imagine a woman with a large nose, prominent mouth and eyes, high cheek-bones, and broad shoulders, looking well in a frilly frock. Anyone can see that this would harmonize with a daintier type of person.

Not alone is scale important to figures and features, but other details must also be studied in costume designing. For instance, a careful modiste would not introduce the same broad detail on a dinner gown that she would on a gown to be worn at the opera, and which had to be effective to one's neighbors on the other side of the orchestra circle. The dinner gown would be looked at from the other side of a table and consequently must stand a more minute inspection.

Though really a part of color, the texture of the

## Everyday Art

materials we use in our gowns and costumes has to be considered for itself alone. In looking over the ultra-modish materials we find that the designers nowadays almost always work to get dull-finished surfaces. There are many very brilliant colors, but few brilliant textures in our modern silks, and the old-fashioned stiff and shiny satin is practically a thing of past generations except for stage or special costumes. Almost all silk and wool and other modish fabrics have the quality of not catching or reflecting much light being so soft that the fine folds break the shiny surface. The modish silks are soft finished and even the newer metal-tissue fabrics are woven with silk threads that somewhat disguise their brilliancy. Of course, any day there may come a mandate to change; but in a general way people are progressing in taste and these dull-finished fabrics are so much more universally becoming to our complexions that they will increase in use.

Individuality in gowns is sometimes so exaggerated that they become just as commonplace as the ready-made. A Gypsy in her unconventional dress is a convention. Suppose we find a special type of gown or costume becoming and have all gowns made on that model. Now to do this we must be very sure that we have chosen the right model, because this is really making a personal taste into a standard, and when repeated has little advantage over a uniform, which, in fact, it is. It may be the easiest way, but easiest ways, though they save us the



*Edith de Lys as Violetta in "Traviata" wearing a period costume of the last century.*

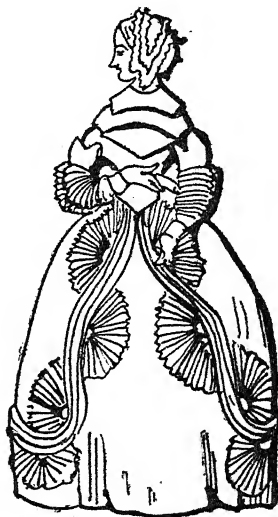


## Costumes or Just Clothes

trouble and responsibility of thinking out new paths for ourselves, do not show individual growth. We can be plastic, design and wear gowns which follow our moods and feelings. We might decide to wear baby clothes or short dresses all our lives. If they



*Man dressed in the period of 1843 when everybody masculine looked really like a "gentleman."*



*Woman dressed as a lady of 1843.*

are becoming and appropriate, of course, we could carry off even baby clothes. But what we really want in dress, after all, is that it should express what kind of person the wearer is, or tries to be. It helps us more or less to a social understanding

## Everyday Art

of friends and neighbors to have them self-expressive in every way, just as costumes characterize the type of work in which some individuals are engaged. No one criticizes or wonders at the uniform of a fireman or the uniform of a trained nurse. They are occupational costumes which subordinate the personality of firemen and nurses while they are engaged in their work. We accept this and do not expect them to dress otherwise. We should be as willing to have costumes explain individuality and individual standards as we are to have them explain occupations. The average man or woman seems to look better in a uniform. We understand them better in it, although they may not really look better and even that small degree of understanding of our fellow-creatures appeals to us.

National costumes do not seem to make the wearer just one of a crowd. Each French peasant looks his or her own part—girl, matron, boy, or patriarch—although all wear the national costume. The reason probably is that the costume has been developed in the course of time by many experiences, and consequently it is all made to suit its own parts. As we say, "The costume is subordinate to type." Also, it is developed through use. It has no superfluous ornament and consequently it has a character in which nothing is superfluous or unnecessary. Anything that is developed through use and without superfluous ornament usually grows into beautiful structural lines, like the driving gear of an engine



## Costumes or Just Clothes

or the handle of an ax. Superfluous ornament is really what makes most things unbeautiful. It is used in most cases to conceal defects in proportion and structure. For this reason, because of its absolute simplicity in type, all the wearers of a national costume may show their individual tastes and feeling for color and detail and ornament without disturbing the general style.

There are many interesting points about historic and national costume. It used to be a kind of camouflage to uphold the traditions of authority and dignity invested in the persons of kings and judges. The robes of royalty and of law were voluminous and heavy, sometimes studded with jewels which added so much weight to the costume that the wearer of it could not move without precision and dignity. These costumes were used to conceal personality and purposely to add characteristics which the wearer did not possess. They took no chances by allowing any whims where reasons of Church or State were involved.

The classical periods of dress and costume were always expressive of the times which developed them. The romantic periods of history had romantic styles of dress and costume. Lydia Languish would not have succeeded with the dramatization of her character in a shirt-waist. The foibles and furbelows of her costumes were as much a part of her as her sighs. The Greek classicists developed a classical costume. The costumes of the Romans were



*Group of old Chinese costumes. Draped materials showing lines similar to other classical periods.*

## Costumes or Just Clothes

adapted to the Roman feeling for more ornamentation and less structure. The Byzantine costumes expressed the sentiment of Eastern religion and Western civilization. Medieval and Gothic costumes were expressive of their times. Now we have the advantage of being able to choose from all these styles that which appeals to us and adapt it to our personal needs. Indeed, it seems as if some people were reincarnations from some other period of history and consequently needed some type of historical costume, or some detail of it, something reminiscent of its general characteristics. We see this often at a fancy ball where people have an opportunity to choose the type of costume which appeals to them.

National or other costume is not just a matter of putting on clothes. We must know how to wear them when on. This is as much an art as costume itself. The Greeks wore certain lengths of uncut cloth. These had to be worn in a manner which expressed the Grecian feeling for drapery. Different styles of line are suggested by the lengths of folds—the severe Egyptian, stately Greek, or florid Roman. There is also a rhythm and tempo in draped costumes, especially those used by different nations for dancing. Nowadays, most of us would find difficulty in wearing a draped cashmere shawl. Many women have them, but do not know what to do with them. When we become sufficiently civilized in regard to costume, we shall be more willing to tear our hair than to cut up a beautiful length of cloth.

## Everyday Art

Jewels are gradually becoming an important part of our modern costumes. The modern tendency of ornamentation is to wear more jewelry, but fewer jewels. The almost universal prejudice against wearing artificial jewels is being upset, because the jewelry now worn has become decorative. Semi-precious stones are used, and modern craftsmen make their work effective and beautiful with colored glass and beads, not valuable in themselves, but very valuable because of the art with which they are arranged. No one feels *déclassé* on account of wearing a glass-bead necklace—at least, no one does except a self-conscious bourgeois.

The modern French craftsmen were probably the first to use semi-precious stones. The line between the real and the unreal is very fine, so that nothing that is used with taste can be said to be an imitation. We used to think that the only people who could afford to wear imitation jewelry, or imitation jewels, were those who could really afford to buy precious stones—because no one would ever suspect them of wearing anything else.

For general advice about wearing jewelry—do not wear it unless it is a part of the design of a costume. Some people have an instinct to wear the right thing because they have the subtle sense which is called “good taste,” or perhaps good sense, which is akin to it. This probably comes from experience and observation or from association with those who have

## Costumes or Just Clothes

knowingly observed many things, and also from thinking of their beauty.

Jewelry or jewels seem out of place on children and one suspects that it is because they must be put on them by grown people. It is doubtful whether most children would care to wear jewelry. If they did choose to wear it, there would be little reason why they should not. It seems to be good sense to dress them as simply as possible until they themselves find something which they wish to show by means of their dress. That is the way they develop their own taste and eventually dress their own individualities. One suspects that a good deal of poor dressing comes from inexperience and mixed standards. Our taste remains undeveloped because we have had someone else's standards imposed upon us and have had no chance to develop a vision of our own in this regard. But if we wish to outlive restricting conventions, we must be willing to have each generation, as it comes along, try its luck at upsetting the established order in dress as well as in other things. The coming race will find great difficulty in upsetting what is really good, but it will have great fun if it succeeds in adding something of its own.

## CHAPTER III

### COLOR IN DRESS AND COSTUME



ANY of us have excellent taste though no one suspects us of it because we have been controlled by maxims such as "neutral tints are safe." Not perceiving that this is no more true than that the way to avoid mistakes is to do nothing, we are timid about following the inclinations and desires of our own hearts.

If we do use an unusual color combination, we are not able to defend it from the criticisms of those who pronounce it "bad taste" because they have never noticed anything like it. Perhaps many of us have admirable taste though we do not know it.

But whatever the reason, most of us need a color doctor, someone who can look at us from an outside point of view and diagnose our case impersonally, for it is certain that we do not dress even ourselves becomingly. We merely clothe ourselves. Perhaps there is something in our psychology that especially leads us astray regarding color. We are in a mood when something bright appeals to us, and we wear it afterward although the desire for it was only a passing feeling. We feel attracted to some color

## Color in Dress and Costume

and we wear it to get near to it. This may account for wearing wrong colors perhaps more than anything else. Or we see someone wearing a color and we think that we can wear that color too, but probably the last person in the world to be the authority on the colors one is to wear is oneself.

A young girl once came to me for advice about color. She was wearing at that time a most obvious combination of ordinary colors. They looked particularly commonplace on her because her own coloring was most unusual and distinguished, and very different from the ordinary person of colorless hair, dull skin, and eyes of no particular note. She was a brunette with light hair, brown eyes, and a clear cream-colored complexion. She had on a modish but thoroughly ordinary gown of the dark purplish blue of commerce, a brown hat, and other unrelated details. The kind of costume that we see ninety-nine times out of a hundred was being worn this time by the hundredth type.

I told her to wear unusual colors which had enough yellow in them to harmonize with the dominating tone of her hair, skin, and eyes, and enough pink to contrast and set them off—colors like apricot pink, garnet, a deep yellowish green, and then some colors like hyacinth blue of a very light tone, turquoise blue. These last two colors would harmoniously contrast with her own color, for the overtone of her color scheme was based in yellow, and the colors I selected for her each had enough yellow in them to

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harmonize with it, or just contrast enough to emphasize it. By overtone is meant the generalization of an individual's color scheme. This is based on some one color which predominates in the skin, eyes, and hair. It is a common denominator. The overtone can be either warm or cool in color quality, either toning into warm, or yellowish red, or into cool, or bluish red. A complexion may be of a cool pink tone, or a yellowish, warm tone. To make it "look right" it may either have to be brought out or subdued. If a person is pale, strong color will kill the little color there is in the skin, and if florid, it will over-emphasize it. Each case requires an actual analysis; there are so many variations in types.

Harmony can be produced either by contrast or likeness. The degree or depth of a color is as important as the color itself, so in selecting colors to wear, use colors of a light value, or high key, if they contrast; and of a deeper tone if they are similar.

This is just one example. It requires a close analysis by the color doctor to prescribe for each person individually, but there are certain general principles of art which will set us on the right road. For instance, there is a very general idea that the proper thing in selecting colors is to wear the colors which match one's eyes. This is sometimes important, but not always. The color of one's eyes is quite easily affected, for eyes in themselves are very changing things and depend besides on the state of the health and the blood supply and are really more



## Color in Dress and Costume

easily influenced than matched. Then, too, most hair is neutral in tone and does not make a very emphatic note in our appearance. It is usually a subordinate part of any personal color scheme unless we have the courage to change it.

The most sensitive and important note, and the one which is the most easily thrown out, is the color of the complexion or skin. It is the keynote of the color scheme in successful dressing. We can partly realize this when we see how almost any color becomes young people, or people with very clear skins, or how much easier it is to get becoming colors when we take to powdering and painting our faces. There is no doubt that persons who make a business of modish dressing and do not sense the importance of being individually distinguished find it necessary to use decorative colors on their faces and skins and hair. Standardizing the face is the easiest way out in modish dressing, but like other standardizing it destroys distinction. If painting and powdering are to be done at all, they should be done not artificially but decoratively. Then there is no good reason why you should not introduce a note of any color that you please in your appearance, and decide on a color scheme which makes it necessary to have a blue or a green face in order to complete it—only you want to be sure whether it is green or blue that is necessary before you embark.

It is little realized that face powder destroys the transparency of the skin. Powder gives the skin a

## Everyday Art

definite texture, but covers its translucent quality, and a clear, transparent skin is really more beautiful than a decorative complexion of noticeable color and texture.

An instance in the use of artificial color is when the hair is dyed and the complexion is not retouched. In an intentional color scheme the hair and complexion should be considered as related parts of a decorative group. Dyed hair, especially on older people, almost always has the effect of aging the face, because the color chosen usually contrasts too strongly with the complexion and throws out the grays and yellows in the skin. If hair which was blond or light becomes gray, it is best dyed its original color, or a shade or two darker. Light hair does not always turn a pleasing gray. But if the hair turns from dark to gray, or nearly white, which is the case with most black or dark hair, it seems a pity to dye it at all except for reasons of state. White hair is beautiful and does not always give the appearance of age, as we see when the hair is powdered.

There is certainly no reason why women with every known tint of complexion should choose henna dye for their hair after the hair has turned gray. Red or auburn hair is almost always accompanied by a beautiful complexion, so if we choose to dye our hair decoratively with henna, then we must correspondingly decorate our faces. There is no reason, except mere convention, why, when a woman

## Color in Dress and Costume

is dyeing her hair, she should not paint her face at the same time. Perhaps it would attract too much attention from men, but it would be more logical and effective to accept it definitely and consciously as a decoration.

I once asked a young dancer why she did not wear colored wigs when she used costumes of different kinds. She said, "I do. I have a green wig, a blue wig, and a purple wig. And for some of my dances I paint my face the color which harmonizes with the wig I am wearing."

The skin is such a sensitive factor in our appearance that it is worth while to give it the utmost consideration. And in order to be well dressed from the standpoint of color, we must find out what is the common denominator of our color scheme, or, as we say, our overtone of color, and harmonize our gowns with it. This needs careful study, but the general principles apply to special cases and they aim to establish a harmonious whole by getting relation between the parts.

Texture—that is, the kind of surface produced in the manufacture of materials, is as important as color in harmonious dressing, and is a part of it. The texture of the skin can be entirely thrown out and eclipsed by the wrong surface of the material worn. If one has a smooth and transparent skin, it is quite possible to wear almost any kind of fabric whether rough or smooth. In a general way it is wise to avoid very shiny surfaces, like satin or taf-

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feta, for instance, which are not easily worn because they compete with the texture of the skin. The effect of satin is extremely brilliant, as all the crisp folds of the material catch the light reflections, making almost any complexion dull. In the days when satins were most worn, in the Louis XIV and XV periods, everyone powdered and painted—hair, eyebrows, and skin—and therefore everyone could wear satin successfully, both men and women. The men also wore wigs and powder; consequently, neither had the problem of the modern woman, which is to create a relation between the satiny textures of her materials and her complexion and hair. Satiny textures can sometimes be successfully worn near the face, but generally lace, net, or maline, around the shoulders of a gown will immensely soften and set off even a beautiful complexion.

With actual colors, one of the greatest difficulties in good dressing is certain deep-seated conventions which are hard to upset. A predilection for black, for instance, had its origin in the days when our grandmother's black silk gown stood as a symbol of practicability, respectability, and religion, and has been handed down to us to confuse our feelings and taste. Our standards regarding the black silk gown have changed. In dusty cities no one thinks black a particularly practical color, and it is not necessarily the sign of respectability either, nowadays. On the stage it usually typifies the lady vamp. Dark blue serge is another and newer symptom of

## Color in Dress and Costume

**Main Street.** Superstitions of this kind are misleading, and as we gradually do away with them we will become sensitive to color for its own sake.

Black should be considered like any other color. Sometimes it is useful and sometimes not; sometimes becoming and sometimes unbecoming. A pale person with a very whitish skin does not look well in black because it makes too sharp a contrast. There is a kind of translucent white complexion found with a certain type of red hair, with which black can be worn. In this case the hair itself is a brilliant note and carries the burden of the color combination, offsetting the black and white. Dark blue, gray, and brown, are also difficult to wear with distinction, and so are many kinds of grays and browns, for gray and brown are actually made up of the three primary colors, blue, red, and yellow, and in them one or the other of the primaries dominates to a certain extent. For instance, we can have a bluish gray, reddish gray, or yellowish gray. We can have a grayish brown, a yellowish brown, or a reddish brown. In practice, ninety-nine people out of a hundred do not consider these difficulties in grays and browns, even if they know them, and do not take them into consideration when planning their color schemes for costumes. Dark blues, browns, and grays, like black, seem to represent a certain kind of repression which has its mental origin in superstition or heredity. Nowadays, so much more brilliant color is used that it is quite non-committal.

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Indeed, if at present we wish to camouflage our state of mind, we could use something in the nature of a brilliant color scheme, because it is now less conspicuous than plain colors.

Of course, there is a tendency to wear too many colors at the same time, though varied colors seem less objectionable than the restraint and repression of a monotonous scheme. There still exists a tendency to match everything in costume, from the string on Downing Street eye-glasses to the spats. "It must match," they say, and the result is that their clothes are as artless as their own attitude toward color. The result is monotony, not harmony. Any dry goods clerk, or anybody else can match colors, but it takes an artist to harmonize them. For instance, one sees a woman dressed entirely in brown with an evident effort to match the colors as closely as possible. Now, of course, they do not match exactly, and it is impossible that they could, being made and sold in different places at different times. A colorist would call this an attempted monotone arrangement, but if a colorist were to make a monotone arrangement the tone value would be selected with the greatest care in order to get the right intervals between the tones. An all-brown costume of one color and one tone would be like playing one note on the piano, or hearing a person speak who never raises his voice in emphasis. A person who is not susceptible to musical harmony would be one who has a monotonous voice. It is just like the dif-

## Color in Dress and Costume

ference in the speaking of languages. The great charm of correctly spoken English, or Parisian French, is the range of values which are struck by the voice. There is nothing monotonous about it, and it sounds individual and distinguished. Monotonous color has the same effect on the colorist that a monotonous voice has on a musician.

The fault in wearing too many colors in a costume is that in any color group one color must be the key-note and the rest be relatively subordinated to it. For instance, there is a very strong bluish red on the magenta tone, something like an American Beauty rose. It is very dominating in color and in itself alone rather objectionable. But like everything else, if skillfully combined it can be used. It has in it a bluish overtone which means that physically and actually this particular magenta has in it another color which is in effect light blue. It can, therefore, be successfully combined with a certain tone of blue and the blue can be further combined with silver, which, to a great extent, subdues the magenta.

A very brilliant color should not be worn by anyone with a great deal of natural color in the complexion, because it supplies an overbalance of some one color, usually red. To neutralize or modify intense color one could successfully wear blacks, whites, grays, browns, and even blues. That, however, is only when with these neutral colors there is brilliancy enough in the complexion to offset them.

## Everyday Art

Perhaps one can wear a very dark tone of some brilliant color without finding it unbecoming.

Color value—that is, the degree of intensity of a color tone, is as important as the color itself. One may be addicted to a certain shade of blue, feeling in a vague way that blue is becoming. But the person who told us to wear blue did not perhaps know enough to tell us just what shade of blue to wear, so that perhaps we should be wearing light blue and we are wearing medium blue. Some colors, if used in their full values, and placed in certain positions, send reflected lights on the face which may absolutely destroy any beauty of color in the skin. For instance, a sallow complexion would not be improved by reflecting a greenish light from the lining of a hat or of a collar.

There is as much individuality shown through the selection of color, indeed perhaps even more, than through form or line, because color is more noticeable. Certain colors become associated in our minds with certain people and seem to express their individuality. There are examples of certain historical characters choosing and wearing certain kinds of color. One could not think, for instance, of Oliver Cromwell's wearing anything but some somber tone of gray or black, or of his poor victim, Charles the First, wearing anything severe at all. But color can be made as much an expression of the moods of our individualities as other things, and, like other things, it is hurt by standardization.



## Color in Dress and Costume

Frocks and gowns must be more than merely acceptable nowadays. They must have real distinction, or must be some expression of the individual wearer combined with the mode of the day. The most modern materials must be chosen to wear in the color which just suits and expresses the individual; not bizarre, unless one has a bizarre personality. Being harmoniously gowned in characteristic and distinguished colors adds to our mental poise, by the representation of our feeling in dress; it conscripts another art to impersonate us.

## CHAPTER IV

### MUSLIN AND IMAGINATION



HERE are two kinds of shoppers, or, at least, two that have any effect on prices: those who know the value of an article only by the price charged for it; and those who could fearlessly buy a pearl necklace from a Grand Street push-cart. The first are guided entirely by how easy or how difficult it is to get what they want, and want only something that has an exclusive price. The other kind trust their own judgment of people and things and have the ability to detect an article of real worth in inferior surroundings.

The brave pioneers who took unbleached muslin out of its accustomed association with sheets, pillow cases, and general household needs, had a vision of it in unfamiliar surroundings. They saw it dyed in charming colors, decorated, made up into blouses or frocks, or used for interior decoration. Great advance has been made in the adaptation of homely materials to unusual ends, and every-day ways are being devised to make them attractive by artistic treatment. In this way not only unbleached muslin



*Edith de Lys in "La Tosca" wearing a hat of the Empire period which forms a background for the face, separating it from confusing detail.*



*Edith de Lys as Aida wearing an Egyptian head-dress which conforms to her costume (also Egyptian) and is a fitting climax for it.*



*A type of face to which bobbed hair is becoming.*



*Portrait of Cornelia Swinnerton, who has the good sense to crop her hair instead of bobbing it.*



## Muslin and Imagination

but many other lowly fabrics have acquired a new-found dignity.

Everybody nowadays seems to have some experience with dyes, but if not, the technique of amateur dyeing is not difficult to learn, for modern chemists have made dyeing a comparatively easy matter. It is not the same now as when our ancestors dyed their homespun threads and cloth and actually prepared dye pigments, such as indigo. So assuming experience or prospective experience, it is a wonder that more of us do not dye clothes and decorations for ourselves, using white or unbleached materials as the foundation of our work.

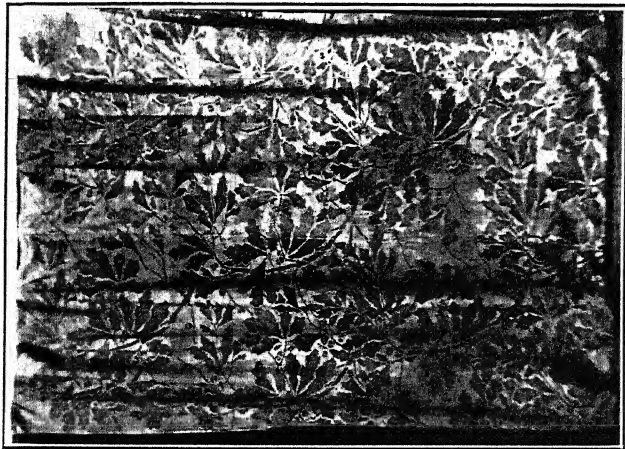
Dyed unbleached muslin wears much better than that which has been bleached, and if washed before it is dyed, it takes all pigments easily. Indeed, it really should be boiled with good grated soap before it is dyed, for otherwise the cotton-seed oil in the cloth hinders the dyeing. Its unbleached color influences and modifies any crudeness that might be in the color of the dye used on it. It tones down dye colors so considerably, that it is almost impossible to get very brilliant colors on unbleached muslin, and for situations where colors must be very brilliant, bleached muslin must be used. However, for our usual clothes and house decoration the modification of the dye color is rather valuable and the lasting quality of the unbleached muslin is more practical. Brilliant colors, while necessary for theatrical work, are not needed to the same extent in

## Everyday Art

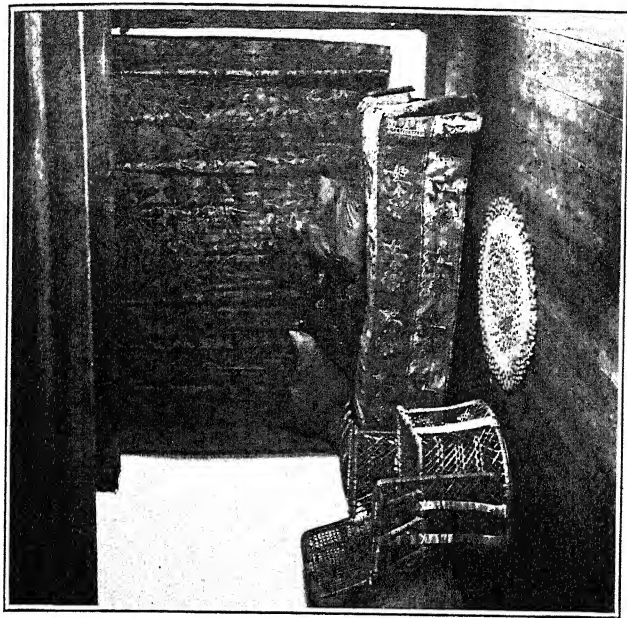
the average scheme of house decoration, since as backgrounds for brilliant color in costumes they should naturally be subordinate in color tone.

Another use of unbleached muslin is a combination of dyeing and stenciling. The design is printed with a stencil on unbleached muslin in some shade of permanent oil color. Then the whole piece of material is dyed the desired shade, the surface of the stenciled cloth becoming softened through the entire process and taking on a velvety texture which makes it seem much heavier than it in reality is. Hangings, in design very much like the old-fashioned painted walls, can be simulated by stenciling a landscape in simple colors on unbleached muslin and then toning the whole by dyeing it atmospheric blue or violet.

There is a linen "profile scrim" which has been extensively used for some time by professional and amateur decorators for window curtains of various kinds. Being an atmospheric gray color, it was originally used for the less substantial parts of scenic trees. Small leaves and branches being pasted on it are held in position in theatrical sets by its almost invisible mesh. It is very strong, as it is made of linen thread, and stands the wear and tear of theatrical life. It is suited for window curtains in places where interiors need screening with the least possible loss of outdoor light, which is the case in many of our city homes. It is so charming that it is often used solely for the decorative effect, and is taking



*The curtain hung in place behind a couch in the living room of an Adirondack camp.*



*A stenciled hanging, East Indian in character. It is made of unbleached muslin, first tied dyed, then stenciled and then redyed to unite the two processes.*





## Muslin and Imagination

the place of the heavily curtained windows which are passing out. Heavy curtains are back numbers except in formal situations.

This theatrical scrim hardly obstructs the passage of light and can be used even in its original tannish gray or putty color, with good effect. More effective still is to dye it to correspond with the decorative color schemes of the rooms in which it is to be placed. Used as sash or pane curtains in the same color as the walls of the room, it is especially good because it does not break up the wall spaces of the room. If just a simple appearance of atmospheric screening is wanted, it is more practical to make up the material in its original color and dye it after the first washing. It can be easily colored with commercial dyes for cotton or mixed goods. As washing or cleaning of materials is the first part of any dyeing process, linen scrim can be dyed before it has been dried, and one handling of it can be saved. Because it is made of unbleached linen thread, as it lightens considerably when washed with any ordinary soap. As its tone after washing is lighter by the use of soap, it more easily dyes a bright color. It is suitable for the decoration of almost any room if used in its natural yellowish gray, which is practically putty color, or used in blue-gray, or even violet or a light yellow. Placed close up against the window panes its color tone adds an atmospheric quality to the window, making the glazed surfaces seem larger than they really are.

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Embroidery adds to the possibilities of linen scrim for house furnishing. The scrim can be bought both retail and wholesale from theatrical furnishers and from trunk manufacturers who use it as a backing for trunk linings.

There is also a kind of square dish toweling which can be used as heavy window hangings. It is a little too dense for sash or pane curtains. It can be treated in pretty much the same way as scrim by dyeing and decorating. Its mesh is perhaps an eighth of an inch square and it looks somewhat like a coarse canvas. It can be ornamented with cross-stitch in design suitable for that type of embroidery. Cotton dish toweling can be bought at wholesale only. At retail it is sold only in dish-cloth size.

Other well-known materials are put to new uses, like burlap, both the fine and the coarse weaves. Coffee bags, or the material of which they are made which is of a very coarse, loose mesh, can be used in the same ways and situations as the linen scrim. Onion sacking is also interesting when dyed.

Then, of course, there is the well-known and ubiquitous cheese-cloth which has long since been separated from its ancient purposes. Though it is still used as a cheese wrapper, it is also used for almost everything else under the sun, from window curtains to fancy dancing costumes. It has largely displaced its more aristocratic cousin, cotton bunting, for flags in and out of doors. But its possibilities have not been entirely exhausted. It can be dyed attractively

## Muslin and Imagination

at home in colors which are not to be found in shops, either retail or wholesale.

Dyeing cheese-cloth changes its whole character. It gets a crêpe-like quality which refines its texture, in the same way that the texture of unbleached muslin is much improved by dyeing. Unbleached cheese cloth is more suited for dyeing because it has not been treated with chemical bleaching powder which weakens cotton thread or any materials made of vegetable fibers.

Many unusual colors on fabrics are dyed at home which cannot be found in shops in a hard day's tramp. There are the beautiful soft-finished silks, crêpes, chiffons, and georgettes, which are suitable for costumes, or even for the more elaborate kind of interior decoration. Chiffon boudoir sash or pane curtains are unusually effective and are not so extravagant as they may seem, for chiffon is one of the toughest of materials and will stand the strain of many washings. These materials can be decorated by processes other than straight dyeing. They can be shaded, tied, and dyed, or ornamented with stencil or blocked print, to say nothing of the much belabored batik. This last process so overshadows most modern methods of decoration that it is the general impression that it is the one and only way of over-ornamenting materials. I am always being asked in prayerful accents, "Oh, do you do batik?" And I always want to answer, "My dear, do pianists play sonatas?"

## Everyday Art

Batik has many possibilities; but a little batik, like a little knowledge, is a dangerous thing. Its technique is as fluid as etching, but we seldom see it used otherwise than mechanically or unadvisedly. The first attempts at batik are easy and exciting, for in the use of an unfamiliar medium one is not apt to be exacting. We are always more critical about our own profession than we are about the professions of others. If one does not know much about ornament, poor ornament is not disturbing.

Textures have much to do with the quality of color, and for hangings a heavier material like fleece-faced cotton, or cotton flannel can be used to advantage. The nap of these flannels when dyed adds great charm of color because of unevenness of tone. It is like that charm in Oriental rugs which comes from cutting the woolen threads. The same thread woven in a flat surface where there is no nap, as in the Navajo rugs, does not give the same charm or hue as in the surface of a rug where the thread is cut to make the pile. In the Navajo rug its beauty entirely depends on the spacing of the designs which are arranged in large, flat masses of color. In Oriental rugs, the light catches the upright ends of each separate thread which gives an infinite variety of color vibration.

Unbleached muslin is used extensively in making the modern versions of American rugs of Colonial ancestry. The originals of these hooked, crocheted, or knitted rugs were made of old materials. Now-

## Muslin and Imagination

adays, the materials we use for our clothes are of such light weight that our modern rug makers have chosen unbleached muslin as a more substantial substitute for their rugs. It is torn into strips of the desired width which are dyed to make the rugs fit into various decorative schemes.

A knowledge of good materials, like a knowledge of cooking, seems to run in some families. Possibly, there are some traditions which hand down knowledge from father to son, or from mother to daughter. Or it may not be inherited except as an unconscious good taste which has to be developed into a knowledge of art. The fact remains that nowadays there are few who have a knowledge of materials, or who have the kind of mind which wants to find out about things they do not know. I remember once sending an assistant out after some bolting cloth, first having explained to her carefully just what it was. But she came back without it because no one in the shops knew what it was, though I knew it was used for decorative purposes even within the memory of my own immediate family.

Nowadays, we get our knowledge of materials from fashionable sources. We are told in the shops that this or that is modish and that information takes the place of knowledge. Fashion in materials is even more exacting than fashion in styles. You may take a fashionable material, make it up to suit your own individual style, and you will still be considered modish. But an unfashionable or unmodish

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fabric, fashioned even in the latest mode, will stamp you as a modishly unknowing person. You can never be smart that way.

There is a general superstition that all old materials were good materials. The good old materials of other times would naturally be the only ones we can see, for the others have not survived. The word "shoddy," however, seems proof that even in our grandmothers' days all cloth was not of the best grade of wool. Shoddy is pure wool, only it is short pieces combed out of old wool cloth and blown onto the twisting threads which catch the shreds. Linsey-woolsey is another old-fashioned material being a combination of linen and wool. I doubt if there ever was a time when there were so many good materials as now. There are ever so many fragile fabrics which would not stand the wear and tear of pioneer conditions, but that does not make them poor in quality. They are suited to our modern purposes, for very few persons nowadays wear either thick or heavy clothing.

When the old-time folks made their own cloth, when they spun their own thread, and wove their homespuns, those who did good work made enduring garments. These handicrafts of other days can be compared only with the hand-made products of today, not with the machine-made products, though the comparison is frequently made by those of us who like to live backwards. Any of us who went to the recent exhibitions of silk manufacturers of

## Muslin and Imagination

America usually held in the Grand Central Palace in New York, realize the enormous progress made in the manufacture of American materials. Literally, hundreds of durable and beautiful materials made in this country were shown—yes, made even in the silk mills of our much maligned New Jersey. Nowadays, our ability to get good materials depends on our ability to select them, for there are many reasonably priced materials which are beautiful and which wear well. Of course, in this we depend more on our imagination and knowledge than on our pocket-books, both of which are often an effective substitute for money.

## CHAPTER V

### NEW CLOTHES FOR OLD



BECAUSE I am an authority on dyeing, I am often asked what dyes I use, the idea being that people think if they can get dyes which are good they can produce beautiful and interesting color effects. But even the best pigments cannot be used successfully without ability and taste. An artist might get pretty good-looking color effects with poor dyes, but it would take an artist to do it, just as it takes an artist and good dyes to get the best results in dyeing textiles. The technical side of dyeing is not difficult if one uses ordinary care; but no one can make an artist of just anybody.

I am also asked where I get my dyes and I say I get them wholesale, because, as I use them all the time, I need them in large quantities. The commercial dye packages which contain the aniline dyes in retail quantities are sold in nearly all drug stores. The only objection to them is that we pay more for them when buying in small quantities. The alternative is wholesale buying directly from a dealer who sells them in pound tins. But unless bought co-



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operatively by a group of amateur dyers, a pound of color would last a lifetime. I once asked a friend of mine why she had thrown away half a kettle full of perfectly good red dye when in these days—it was during the War—dyestuffs of any kind were so difficult to get. She said she had started in by dyeing a piece of silk for a hat. “Why didn’t you dye something else while you were about it?” I asked. “But I did,” she replied. “In order to save the red dye I dyed all my white silk stockings, two white silk petticoats, and all father’s white silk ties!” Knowing the peril of the necktie problem in any family, I ceased protesting.

Then there seems to be a general impression that dyeing is injurious to fabrics. But if a garment is properly dyed, its lifetime is doubled. Dust and dirt destroy more materials than wear or dyeing, because the sharp particles of the dust cut and break the threads of the fabric, but as all goods must be cleaned before they are dyed, dyeing serves a double purpose. A garment will wear out by only hanging in a closet.

Commercial dyers tell us the same thing when we take our garments to them. They never dye anything without first cleaning it with gasoline. Dye does not “take” over grease and dirt. No one can get an even color on a soiled material, for all dyes have a decided liking for grease and dirt, and if a soiled garment is dipped into the dye pot the dye will settle on these spots and leave permanent and

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unsightly marks and uneven color. All directions on dye packages say the same thing: "See that your goods are thoroughly cleansed before putting them into the dye."

We do not have to use gasoline to cleanse our garments, but if used, look out that the fumes do not blow over to a light somewhere and explode ruinously. Soap and water are even better than gasoline though they take more time. Use old Castile soap, because the harder the soap the more easily it is grated. Powdered soap is the secret of all good washing and grated soap is the same, because in solution it penetrates all parts of the material. Grated or powdered soaps, whether commercial or hand made, melt easily and evenly in hot water. Even the finest silks and crêpes can be washed without harm if afterward they are thoroughly rinsed.

There are other precautions which will give materials an even color when dyed, but cleanliness is rather ahead of godliness in this respect. Almost everyone believes that gasoline cleanses clothes better than soap and water. It cleanses them more easily, but materials dipped in gasoline soil more than when cleaned with soap, because there is always a residue of oil left in the material by the most volatile gas. Professional cleaning is a convenient though expensive method of keeping clothes in order. If we are working on the professional stage where garments are exposed to soil in an un-

## New Clothes for Old

usual way and where every minute of their absence from the stage counts, gasoline is practical. But for every-day wear, use soap and water.

Even boiling water will not hurt the finest materials, though sometimes it will yellow white silk. But some white silks will turn yellow anyway, whether they are boiled or not. It would be better to wash them with the coarsest soap than not to wash them at all. Olive oil soap is the best to use on silk, and when grated it will dislodge dirt just as well as any commercial soap powder, whose main virtue is not that it is different or better than other soap, but that it is powdered. Do not rub soap on any material, for then only parts of it are really cleaned.

All very sheer, fine, and soft finish silks, respond to this treatment. Chiffon, chiffon cloth, crêpe, silk lace, georgettes, raw silks come out like new. Satins, taffetas, gros grains, or any stiff silks, especially if they have a high luster, are not easy to wash successfully. The washing in itself is easy enough, but they have to be refinished by special processes which are out of reach of the amateur dyer.

The materials for renewing the youth of our clothes are easily assembled. Olive oil soap may be bought in bars, cut into cakes, dried, and, when grated, kept in dust-proof tin containers until used.

Each dye package has its name printed on the outside, marked, for example: "Green for Silk," or, "Green for Wool or Mixed Goods," or, "Green for

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Cotton." A silk dye will not dye cotton and a cotton dye will not dye silk. So be careful when buying a package to see that it contains the right kind of dye for the goods you are dyeing.

Either salt or vinegar is called for with the contents of each dye package and must be used as directed on them. Salt is used with dyes for the vegetable fibers, cotton, linen, or jute; vinegar for the animal fibers, silk and wool. Artificial silk may be dyed with dyes for vegetable fibers.

After deciding on color you are ready to begin. Everything must be prepared in advance. Spread a wet newspaper on a table and open the package of dye carefully, for the small particles of dry dye are so minute that they fly around and may settle on something they can injure. Small particles of dye may get on the hands and transfer themselves to the material being dyed, or they may settle on the material itself and permanently stain it.

Pour part of the contents of the dye into a small cheese-cloth bag and place the bag in an earthenware bowl. Then pour boiling water into the bowl to dissolve the dye. In this way the dye can be dipped out into the dye kettle a little at a time as it is used. Most of us waste more dye than we use by putting too much into the dye bath at first. Dry dye will keep almost indefinitely unless subjected to moisture or dampness, but dye that has been dissolved will sometimes mold or change color.

The kettle or receptacle used to dye in must be

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absolutely free from dust and grease and must be partly filled with boiling water. Then add a small portion of the dissolved dye and whatever chemical is called for in the directions on the dye package. Let these boil together until all the dye is thoroughly dissolved. Dyestuffs do not dissolve unless they have been properly mixed with their especial chemicals and boiled. After the small amount of dye in the kettle has boiled, fill up the kettle with cold water to lower the temperature so that it is much below boiling point before the goods are put in the kettle and become saturated with the dye. This prevents uneven dyeing and spotting, for the parts of the material which first reach the boiling dye will be much darker than the rest, as the coloring matter in the dye has a tendency to settle where the material is hottest. Materials must never be dipped into boiling dye. Add enough water to thoroughly cool off the dyestuff. If the material is not dark enough after all the color in the dye vat has disappeared, more dye can be added and we can go to work as before. Of course, the goods should be taken out of the dye vat before adding more dye.

In all dyeing an effort must be made to keep conditions as uniform as possible, as there are many chances to miss out in a process so largely based on chemical reactions which are not easy to control entirely even with long experience. All goods must be wet thoroughly before they are dipped into the dye vat as wet materials take dye easily and evenly. Dry

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materials should never be put into any kind of dye. Not only must the material be wet, but it must be evenly wet, perhaps moist is the better term. Put through a wringer to get an even moistness. Plunge the wet material into the kettle as quickly as possible and push it under the water until none of it can be seen. Then stir the kettle constantly until the material is the proper color. To handle the goods, use either glass mixing rods or wooden sticks. Glass rods are better for silk and light materials, but they are apt to break in handling heavier materials. Old broomsticks, which have become smoothed off through much use, can be sawed into lengths of two feet and made into very practical assistants. Stirring the dye bath constantly prevents two things: it keeps the goods from resting on the bottom of the kettle where the heat is most intense and the color from becoming deeper and uneven in spots. When air bubbles work up from the bottom of the vat through the action of the heat, they cause the materials to float above the surface of the boiling dye where they are exposed to the air and absorb the color unevenly. Material must not only be kept under water in the vat, but it must be kept moving.

When lifting the goods out of the kettle to see how the color is taking, lift it out entirely by winding it around the sticks, and then dip it in again quickly. It is a good thing to test the dye bath with a small sample of goods before the whole garment

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is put into the kettle, to see if the color is right. Color on materials, of course, lightens as it dries, but if you wish to see approximately how material will look when dry, hold up a piece against the light and the color with the light coming through the wet goods will look about the actual color when the material dries. The color itself does not change in drying, but the degree of color changes.

Of all materials, silks take the dye the easiest, and linen with the most difficulty. So with silk great care must be taken to prevent the material from absorbing the dye too quickly. It should never be plunged into a hot dye bath, but always into water of moderate temperature and be allowed to boil up, stirring with the glass sticks. Wooden sticks will catch and roughen up fine materials. Cotton goods fade more than other materials because the cotton fabric is dyed with more difficulty, and because so many low-priced cottons are sold that the manufacturers cannot afford to use the best quality of dyes or to give the dye processes the proper amount of care. Fading does not always come, however, because the dye is poor. Very often too much dye has been used in the dye bath—more than the material will absorb—and consequently some of the color particles have never been really attached to the fiber of the material. When the materials are used, the dye particles become loosened and fall off which is known as “fading.”

Another kind of fading is technically called

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“bleeding,” which is when the dyes run as soon as the material is put into water or washed. The cause is the same. The dye pigments have not become attached to the material. Some dyestuffs will fade by the action of light or heat, but that is the nature of a chemical action and can hardly be prevented. Very few colors on materials are proof against acid. Silks will not stand washing with strong soaps because the alkali in the soaps is injurious to silk fiber. Olive oil soaps have a certain amount of native oil which neutralizes the alkali. Silks, on the contrary, will stand a reasonable amount of acid, especially acetic acid which so largely evaporates afterward. Cottons will stand alkali, but acid destroys the cotton fiber.

Wools and cottons can be treated just as if they had been washed in the ordinary way after they have been dyed. Few people treat silks properly. They should never be ironed, but should be pressed out when nearly dry, and then with only a moderately hot iron. Sometimes goods get a very beautiful texture by simply shaking them dry. This is true especially of crêpes, or chiffons, or other crêpy materials. But whatever is done, never wring silks of any kind. Shake them until they are dry enough to press. If a piece is too long to handle easily, pin the selvages on a line and shake the line, and when the top selvage is dry, turn it around and dry the other one.

In re-dyeing garments to freshen or change the



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colors, lighter colors cannot be dyed over dark, but very light colors will take almost any other dark color. There are certain things, however, which cannot be done. For instance, blue will not dye over bright yellow, or orange, or vice versa. Blue over yellow, or yellow over blue, makes green, and blue over orange, or orange over blue, will make brown. Browns can be dyed over yellows and reds, blues, and purplish grays. Purple can be dyed over red or blue and the under color will influence it and turn it into either a blue purple or a red purple. Olive green can be dyed with green over yellow, olive brown with brown over green. Dark blues and black, of course, can be dyed over almost any color. Faded brown goods can be immensely freshened and bright-ended by being re-dyed with a slight tone of yellow or red. The main idea in dyeing one color over another is not to use any color over another which will neutralize it—that is to say, anything other than the same order of color will have a tendency to neutralize the color underneath.

Some dyers use a chemical to discharge color before they re-dye, which takes all the original color out of the goods. This, however, is somewhat risky, as discharges usually contain acid and unless handled by an expert may weaken or rot the thread.

It is not always necessary to rip up an entire garment when re-dyeing it, and after one has had a certain amount of practice, one can dye a made-up gown. Where the material is pleated or gathered,

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it is perhaps better to rip it. This makes it easier for the dye to penetrate that part and saves the remaking of the whole garment. Beginners might try some goods by the yard first until accustomed to the work. Do not try to put long lengths of goods into a small kettle. If the goods are crowded into a kettle where they touch the sides, they cannot easily be stirred and results will be bad.

A five-gallon kettle is large enough to dye about anything the home dyer is apt to undertake. Get an old-fashioned brass or copper kettle if possible, for dyeing, but if not a granite preserving kettle can be used. Never use an iron kettle or a granite kettle with imperfect or cracked enamel, for all iron is subject to rust and spoils the dye by chemical action. Even the iron handles of copper and brass vessels should be wound with cloth to keep them from touching the material when put into the dye bath.

A few packages of dyestuffs will surprise and charm us with the new and fascinating colors with which we can dye old clothes, especially summer clothes which, being made of cotton materials, have a greater tendency to fade than silk or wool. This magic craft then becomes decidedly profitable. It leads us to change old and faded things into new. That is, it may be profitable if we are not too excited and thrilled by the idea to make the necessary preparations. Even an old hand at domesticated dyeing cannot afford to leave out any part in a process which is always carefully handled by professionals.

## CHAPTER VI

### BACKGROUNDS FOR PEOPLE AND PICTURES

HY," said a client to me once, after I had just finished the decoration of his apartment, "this place looks awfully empty. Aren't you going to do anything more?" "No," I replied, "the rest is for you to do. You are going to live here and the detail introduced on this background must be brought in by the person who uses the rooms. As a professional, I have set up a harmonious and agreeable background for you to live on by showing the relations of color and form and by carrying them out in paper, paint, and materials; and by curtaining your windows, carpeting your floors, and placing your furniture in the right grouping. But I have gone absolutely as far as any professional should go. You have been wise enough to get professional advice in furnishing your rooms. I must be wise enough to know when to leave off. You will add all the necessary detail yourself when you come to live in them." And he saw that it was so. Had I put in my little personal ideas,

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the rooms would have looked jumbled up when his personal things were added.

If we lose our identities in our own homes, in a certain way we lose the meaning of our homes, which, as our immediate surroundings, interest or might interest others in us. We silhouette ourselves against our backgrounds—that is, if they really are backgrounds. If not, we stick on them and become a confused part of them. The object of camouflage is to confuse the background with the individual person or thing so that it cannot be detached or distinguished from it. We get our suggestions for camouflage from the protective colorings of birds and animals. In our own homes we should not need protective colorings or the effect of camouflage, though we often unconsciously get it by wearing unbecoming gowns and standing before unbecoming backgrounds.

When we buy a valuable painting we consider very carefully how it should best be placed, and we get expert professional advice as to the background that will show it off to its best advantage. We certainly ought to be willing to do the same for ourselves, who are really so much more important than any other work of art. Perhaps if we became more artistically important ourselves, we would find a great deal of so-called art unnecessary.

In the great museums the utmost care is exercised in the selection of backgrounds suitable for the collection of paintings and other objects of value.

## Backgrounds

Backgrounds are selected which have the kind and quality of color that will set off and harmonize the various objects in the museum rooms. We seek what will give these rooms a harmonious appearance without destroying our interest in each particular work of art. There are certain colors which can be counted upon to produce this effect, colors which are not too emphatic nor too non-committal, like tones of tan, grays, gold, or silver. In the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York the Morgan collection of Chinese porcelains was staged on gold-colored Chinese silk. Among these porcelains there is probably a predominating combination of white and blue, or blue with white. The gold-colored silk in a medium tone afforded just enough contrast in color and tone to set off the bulk of the objects exhibited. It is not too emphatic in color or too decided in tone. It established a general tonality with the whole exhibition in its relation to the blue and white. The other pieces of porcelain in different and varied colors simply added minor notes of contrast. After a color tonality has once been established, it is not easy to upset it by minor details. There are some rooms where if you drop a pin you will immediately find a state of confusion. There are others in which the color is so consistent and calm that a whole box of pins does not upset them though they may upset you.

We are apt to think only of the walls of a room as being backgrounds, but anything may become a

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background—a piece of furniture, for instance, which, like a sofa, sets off or harmonizes the gown silhouetted against it. Walls are the backgrounds for pictures which are nailed or hung on them, and for the people whose coming and going stands out against them. The floor of a room is the background for the furniture in it, and even a lighting fixture may be silhouetted against a ceiling if we happen to be looking at it from a certain angle. Some mediæval costumes were especially designed to silhouette themselves against a large cloak or cape which acted as a background for the entire figure.

In distributing furniture in a room, if its shapes are beautiful it can be successfully arranged in various ways against the floor as a background. Dark furniture should be placed on light-colored floors and light furniture on dark floors, if you wish to emphasize their form. In my studio is a room of long and narrow proportions which has a bright yellow-painted floor partly covered by a dark blue rug at one end. The dark furniture is placed on the yellow floor and the lighter pieces on the dark blue rug. As they are all antiques of good style and proportion they look equally well on their different backgrounds.

In rooms where many people come and go, like the rooms in museums where many objects are exhibited, backgrounds must necessarily be more neutral in tone. These are not like rooms in one's own house, where if one wishes to carry out a color scheme, one

## Backgrounds

can choose a gown to harmonize with the color of the walls and wear only such gowns as look well on carefully selected backgrounds. The walls of rooms where many people come should be of some color which will associate many dissimilar objects. All public buildings, restaurants, and clubs have this problem. The larger the gathering place the more must the background be neutralized and tones used which give distance, atmosphere, or light, and above all, suggest space. In small personal rooms or apartments we can use brilliant or intense color as long as it harmonizes with the furniture and sets off our costumes. This simply means that certain relations must always be established—relationships which do not differ in kind, but vary only in degree of color and tone intensity.

Gold and silver make wonderful backgrounds because they reflect colors and changing lights, and while they are actually one tone, they give the effect of many different tones. For this reason, gold or silver can be used either on large rooms or on small rooms. There are many rooms in which the background may harmonize in sentiment with the purpose of the room—ballrooms where the background must be stately in color and detail, or dining-rooms where formal dinners are given. Sometimes, of course, a ballroom can be less severe. The old Havemeyer house had one done in rose-colored satin and gilt mirrors. It was commonplace, but perfectly suited as a background for any degree of frivolous

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entertainment. It had its origin in the ornament of the French periods of Louis XIV and Louis XV.

To make good backgrounds for pictures, we go to work in the same way as making them for people. The usual method of family-picture hanging seems to depend on the amount of picture wire in the house—at least, this is the way it looks after the pictures are hung. The recipe seems to be, to first count pictures, then divide the number of wire feet by the number of pictures, then hang. Probably, however, there is not even so much system as this. Usually, the first one or two pictures are hung with enthusiasm, and boredom hangs the rest.

For average consumption, it is wise to hang pictures on the general eye level. Important pictures, like important people, must have a setting which brings out all their distinctive beauty. Pictures which have not so much individuality can be hung in decorative groups, placed in a manner which is becoming to the room where they are used or placed, so that whatever meaning they may have will not be lost. Pictures used exclusively as furniture are not really any more successful than books used as furniture. Books and pictures have purpose of their own. There are other and more successful ways to decorate walls. I once saw the apartment of a very literary lady furnished with books. That in itself might have been successful, but unfortunately the books were placed on shelves so near the ceiling that the effect was rather of the hanging gardens of



## Backgrounds

Babylon than that of a much-used library. There was not even a rolling step-ladder in the room.

The stage gives us many interesting suggestions of what may be done with backgrounds. We need not take them literally or make our own setting artificially theatrical. In the theater the aim is always to get a definite effect. To get effects there must always be elimination of uncharacteristic detail. Which means purposely leaving out those things which do not help us to say the thing we want; which would not add the right kind of character if used. The technical difficulties of the stage fortunately and actually make for economy of detail and that which says most has the quality of artistic simplicity. The stages of the Chinese theater show this quality more than any other, even more than the modern German, which is also simplified by symbolism.

Whistler, who is considered one of our greatest artists, was a master of elimination, but I saw a collection of early Chinese drawings and Whistler etchings enlarged on a photographic screen and the result was that by comparison with the perfect economy of line in the Chinese work the Whistlers looked complex. The Chinese drawings gave a quicker, stronger, and more direct impression of what was being said. The theater more than anything else, because it is a combination practically of all arts, is our greatest teacher. In the art of the theater the relation of its parts must be strictly observed to furnish certain illusions, and for that rea-

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son it affords a good example of what artistic principles can do. What seems to us artificial in it is simply because we are unfamiliar with its standards of values which work together to economize time, space, and material.

## CHAPTER VII

### MORE ART—LESS FURNITURE



It is as important that we should feel happy and comfortable in our own homes as in other people's houses. Our furniture and things should be part of our comfort and pleasure. A house may be underfurnished for the sake of a supposed artistic effect, and there may not be enough furniture, or the furniture may be uncomfortable, but that is not art. Or a housekeeper may be so interested in the physical care of the household that its importance is exaggerated and everybody becomes cross while achieving perfection. I once knew a woman who lived in an old house where there was a great deal of accumulated dust in the cracks of the floor. Until she had dug out the dust she made everybody, including herself, miserable.

On the other hand, there may be an over-amount of luxury which is often mistaken for comfort or beauty. There is usually more need for taking things out of a house than there is of putting them in. By eliminating everything that is not of actual service, its beauty will take care of itself. Almost

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all of us have some good pieces of furniture which we do not really appreciate because we have been so accustomed to having them around and seeing them on backgrounds which are not becoming to them. Often there are good old pieces passed on from one generation to another which finally come into surroundings for which they were not chosen and which do not show them off to advantage. They have been crowded into small places which put their generous proportions and lines out of scale. Misplaced furniture is like misplaced people. It does not just happen to fit, because it is not in its proper surroundings. Really beautiful furniture is more easily placed and is more easily related to its surroundings than ugly furniture. There is nothing so lasting as beauty, because when one comes to understand that a thing is really beautiful, one wishes to take care of it. We often say of people, "They are careless because they are not used to good things." Furniture of medium price, the kind of furniture that most of us can afford to buy, is not so beautiful as the old hand-made pieces, but it is getting better every day, and houses can be made to look exceedingly well if a little care is used in its selection.

It is a good rule in furnishing a home, when buying a new piece of furniture, to get rid of an old piece. This will keep rooms from being crowded. More than likely, too, our taste improves as we go along and have learned more about furniture. But

## More Art—Less Furniture

do not get rid of anything because someone says he or she does not like it. That is not convincing and we will later regret having let it go. There are three good reasons for keeping anything: first, because it is useful; second, because it is beautiful; and third, because we happen to like it. We may like something which is neither beautiful nor useful, but if there are useful and beautiful things about us we will soon learn by comparison.

Elaborate furnishings are not necessary for either beauty or comfort. The most perfectly furnished homes show the maximum of comfort with the maximum of good sense or good taste. In a house suitably furnished, everything in it has some reason for being where it is and for being used as it is. The first thing to do when furnishing any house is to eliminate, and eliminate, and then eliminate again, before beginning to refurnish or rearrange. Look over everything and see how many pieces of furniture are not really necessary for comfort. Then find out how many pieces are really beautiful which should be kept for that reason alone.

We are often afraid to give away or throw away or sell something we think we may need at some future time, and consequently some day we discover that our attics are filled with a lot of stuff we cannot possibly get rid of, though we do not either want it or need it. Get rid of anything that is not really in use. If it cannot be sold, better give it away or lend it. The lendee may become attached to its

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charms and discover a sense of ownership in it. There are always some ways of passing things along which have lost their meaning to us, but which may supply the needs, either real or imaginary, of someone else and serve him as an experience.

I remember once seeing the hut of a signal man at the railroad crossing filled with the crudest kind of newspaper pictures. In front of his hut was a magnificent view which one would have thought so satisfying that he would not have needed the crude pictures inside his little home. But he evidently did not really see the view. He had not arrived where he could see beauty directly and could appreciate it only through someone else's eyes.

Rooms and houses, like people, have features which wrong emphasis make grotesque. And rooms and houses, like people, have other features which right emphasis can make attractive. Every room of a house is a problem in design. Its walls and floor are the blank spaces and its furnishings are the parts of the design to be grouped within these spaces just as if they were forms and colors arranged on a piece of paper. Even a serious defect of the architecture can be concealed by carefully planning the color schemes and furnishings. Even one good piece of furniture, either young or old, set against the right background will do much to make a room an attractive place to live in.

It is not always possible to begin decorating a room or house without having to consider some rug

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which does not need re-dyeing or a piece of furniture which is already on hand, a lounge or sofa which does not need recovering, and which therefore influences us in a choice of color. But whether we have old or new furniture, the most important thing in a home is to get its backgrounds painted, kalsomined, and papered in the right combination of color and color tone. When the side walls, floors, and ceilings of rooms are harmonious, and the furniture considered as part of a decorative plan, we will need fewer things in a room, because, being in the right relation to their backgrounds, they count for more. For a successful plan seems complete when executed, because its parts have been harmonized and brought together by artistic principles. Much thought, time, and training go into the education of a professional architect, and the house an architect is responsible for building should be decorated and furnished at least with equal care. It may take a little time to get used to simplicity in decoration, for at first a carefully planned room may seem empty. But having lived in it for a time, the charm of less crowded surroundings will be liked.

Planning all the important furnishings in a room should be part of the decoration. Often, after the decorative scheme is determined, something occurs to a decorator, or perhaps to the owner, and important features are introduced which do not fit in because they were not originally in the scheme. We

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are apt to think that this or that thing will not matter, but every important piece of furniture is of consequence, and unless it is included in the decorative plan it will not be in harmony. Of course, a good room will not be upset by the introduction of some minor detail. Once the relations of the walls, floors, and ceilings are established and the room has acquired what the artists call "tonality," its style and color will be stable enough to stand the introduction of relatively unimportant objects. It is wiser, however, to have a pretty clear vision of a house or room and of everything in it, before we start to furnish it, and everything added should be selected with the scheme of decoration in mind so that it will correspond to it either in color or style.

When decorating a room, first study its size and shape. Scale or size is most important in furnishing a home. Each room calls for a certain scale of furniture and everything in it should conform to that scale. Objects which are too small or too large are out of relation with the scale, and even though they are correct in color they will be out of place. Scale is a decorative feature which is rather sensed than acknowledged, but once we become conscious of it, we will realize how much it adds to the harmony of any room.

If a room has any peculiar or unusual features, think them over. If they are not too exaggerated, they can be modified and practically overcome. If



## More Art—Less Furniture

it is impossible to conceal them, emphasize them. For a room with pronounced features is like a person with a pronounced individuality—neither one nor the other looks well in conventional dress. It should be studied just as an expert dressmaker studies the style of a person for whom she is designing a gown. Rooms or people with marked individuality should be decorated or dressed to emphasize their style. Sometimes one is so eager to get a clean paper on a room that one picks out something that, though attractive enough in itself, is not suitable for the room. In buying a wall paper, select it to suit the individuality of that room on which it is to be used.

The average room requires a great deal of modification to make it harmonious. It may have defects in proportion, may be too long or too narrow, too high or too wide. In most cases if a room is high and narrow, striped wall paper might not be suitable, but there might be a high and narrow room which, because of some unusual combination of features, should have its narrowness and height accentuated. All schemes of decoration for a room must harmonize with its distinctive individuality. The tone and color of the paint for the walls, woodwork, and floor, the design of the wall paper, must conform to it. In that only can we get distinctive effects in decoration.

Perhaps you would rather have paint or kalsomine on your walls than wall paper. Then the problem is in getting harmony between the tones

## Everyday Art

and colors on the spaces of the walls, ceilings, and floors. After all the color effects of a home have been planned, the furniture, old and new, can be grouped in artistic combinations of style and color.

It is important to arrange a room so that anyone entering it will get a clear impression of its style. If on entering we do not get a general impression of harmony, even though we are not conscious of it, the decoration cannot be called successful. Sometimes it is a sense of space which gives charm. If the proportions of a room are correct, it will look larger than its actual size. A good decorator can sometimes give a feeling of a wide perspective even in a small room or hall. Even a mere detail, like the position of some of the furniture or rugs, will help to add a sense of length, placed in the right way. Just as length can be cut off a short person by designing a gown on lines which cross the figure, so the length of any room can be cut off by placing a rug or furniture at right angles to its length. A rug placed lengthwise in a room, and especially if it is in the position near a door where one enters, will give a sense of spaciousness. Bookcases, either built-in bookcases or separate pieces placed lengthwise to the wall, will have the same effect.

A sense of the architectural dignity in a room can be had by leaving wall space which connects up the floor and ceiling, by rearranging the furniture so that one can see the floor and side walls and ceiling come together. The ceiling, of course, is not

## More Art—Less Furniture

apt to be interrupted by objects, as pictures are rarely hung near the ceiling. But floor spaces are often unnecessarily crowded.

There may be too many kinds of curtains at the window, because some modish vogue for decorating windows in a certain way requires three separate sets, one of which would be enough in our city houses to keep out the much-needed sunlight and air. Of course, if we are set on living according to the notions of the modish decorator, the only thing to do is to worry along under stylish but uncomfortable conditions. I once went through the house of an intimate friend of mine which she had just finished furnishing. She took me to her husband's bedroom. "How do you like it?" she asked, and continued, "It seems to me quite charming, but somehow John does not seem comfortable here." "Do you want my real opinion?" I asked, "or do you want me to agree with you?" She said, "I would like you to say what you think, if you don't mind." "Well," I said, "I should think John would feel as if he were living in a decorator's show window." John was not able to express himself in his own room though it was rather a good expression of William and Mary Tudor. If John had had a Tudor personality, or been a reincarnation, he might have been comfortable. Personality is that in which one differs from the mechanically made man or room.

There is, of course, much reason for using furniture of other periods in house decoration, and even

## Everyday Art

sometimes, if one desired, in decorating a room consistently in one period. But the ideal of people who wish to express a more modern tendency in their home seems to be more reminiscent than actual in the use of furnishings of former periods.

In the houses of earlier periods of architecture, there was, doubtless, just as much variety in type of furnishings as the date of each period permitted, for whenever communication between peoples was possible there must have been traffic in merchandise. Through the communication between Middle Europe and the Far East, Oriental fabrics were introduced into the homes of earlier civilizations as decorations and also as garments. We think of classical periods as being more strictly of one style than they actually were. Probably, the Greeks used foreign materials to whatever extent they were able to get them. Though traveling in those days was not easy, there was traveling enough to accumulate foreign possessions.

If one has a feeling for classical style, it is proper enough to express oneself in it. But where the classic becomes an authority to suppress individual feeling, it is not an incentive to creative art. In the terrible destruction of beautiful buildings and works of art in the war zone of European countries in the last War, most things destroyed were not modern art. They were expressions of other people of other times, who, having a feeling for beauty, made beautiful things. If it were possible to re-

## More Art—Less Furniture

establish the conditions under which those things were made, we could not, as modern people, feel ourselves into them. Therefore, we need not cling tenaciously to things that have been done, but look forward ourselves to doing things under conditions which, though different, are in their way as inspiring to art production as those of earlier times.

## CHAPTER VIII

### PAINTED AND BUILT-IN FURNITURE



HUNTING around for furniture, chairs, tables, and the like, brings the conviction that unless one can afford to pay a high price it is better to get something simple and use it until something turns up that is really old and beautiful—or new and beautiful. Or perhaps until we learn to make something beautiful.

By far the most satisfactory furniture, the cheapest, the easiest to get, is the kitchen chair, wash bench, and table—the unpainted kind of wooden furniture which has been so much used in the casual tea room, over-ornamented in the wildest color combinations to shock and attract the provincial sight-seer from out of town or uptown. The furniture may all be bought in large department stores and, if painted with taste, may be made charming.

I have seen the studio of a dancer where the only furniture was a series of wooden benches placed against the wall. They were painted cream white to match the woodwork in the room and had a certain classic simplicity of style. Not only are such benches becoming to some rooms, but some of the

## Painted and Built-in Furniture

kitchen chairs may be made a decorative asset if correctly used. There are two kinds of the commercial kitchen chair: the cheapest kind, in which the rungs and the slats in the back are only glued in and which are usually made of several kinds of wood in the same chair; and the better kind, which is made of two kinds of wood, one used for the seat and the other for the back and legs. This chair has what is known as a string piece screwed to the back and also to the seat. This feature gives the chair much more strength and wearing quality, and its cost is very little more.

There are two kinds of tables: the settle variety which is an ironing table, and the regular kitchen work table. The work table has either turned or straight, angular legs. As usual, the tables with the straight, square legs are a little more expensive than the others, as poor material may always be concealed, ostrich fashion, in superfluous turns and twists.

The benches are part of a laundry equipment and can be bought in various lengths. With a saw and a little discretion, they can be made lower; then if cushions are added later their height is about that of the average chair. Cutting the legs shorter gives the bench a broader standing base and an appearance of more stability.

All this furniture should be bought in the natural wood without finish or varnish and is then easily painted. They are all better looking when given

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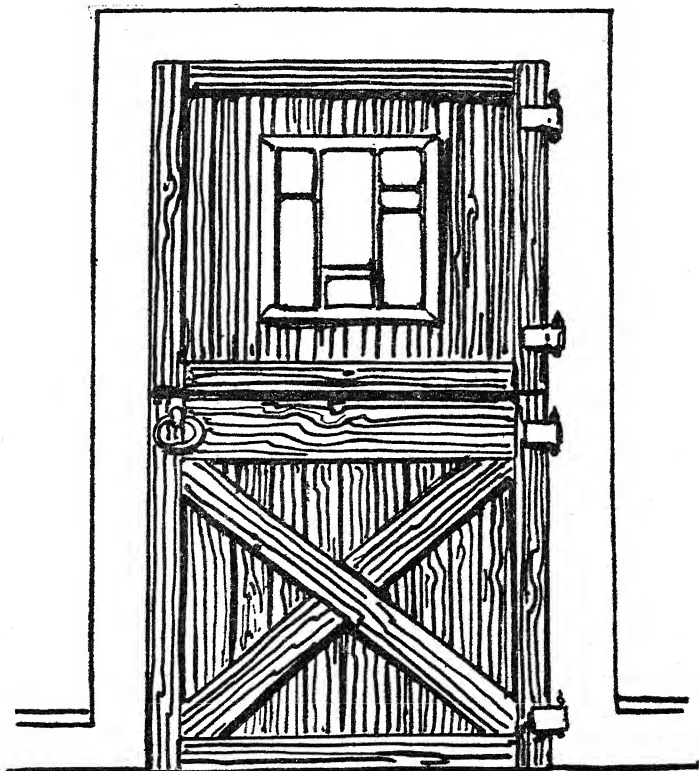
more than one coat of paint because, as they are often rough in finish and made of more than one kind of wood, the difference in grain must be covered. Painting them in dark or medium tones of strong color also minimizes the irregularities in their surface. Light color paint on woodwork of any kind shows up all defects.

The best way to paint wooden furniture is to get white lead ground in oil, and mix in powdered color, or color ground in oil just as house painters do. Ready-mixed paints in cans are very handy to use and require much less effort, but they have not the lasting quality of the paints one mixes oneself, if one knows how.

The success of painted furniture depends on the selection of colors and on the kind and color of the material for upholstering, if any is used. The best way is to paint the chairs, benches, and tables a color which contrasts with the woodwork of the room in which they are placed. If a similar color is preferred, then a deeper tone should be used—at least three shades deeper. For example, if the walls of a room are primrose yellow, the woodwork a deep cream, a deep, brilliant orange could be used on the wooden furniture, and further contrast could be added by notes of brilliant color in the covering cushions or chair pads made of cretonne or other cotton material. If one practices the dyer's craft at all, unbleached muslins can be used for draperies and coverings with painted furniture, with less ex-



## Painted and Built-in Furniture



*Good looking doors are difficult to find in factory stock. This door can be built by any intelligent carpenter who can follow directions.*

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pense and better effect than anything else. Unbleached muslin dyed and washed gets a lovely soft texture which other commercial materials do not have. It can be dyed with commercial dye, but, of course, not unless care is taken to follow directions on the dye packets.

Another excellent way of furnishing one's house or rooms at little cost is to use built-in furniture, which, though it may not always be worked out on classical proportions, is so simple and unpretentious that it is acceptable. Furthermore, it may be made by the average carpenter if he is given careful measurements and carefully superintended. Built-in furniture is rather more expensive than the factory-made tables, chairs, and benches, but in the end it is apt to cost less than furniture of uncertain periods and is certainly more worthy of a permanent home. With built-in furniture one can have a few old pieces of rare wood of good style instead of a collection of modernized antiques without character, beauty, or individuality. Built-in furniture harmonizes very well with the ready-made unpainted kind, but it is better painted the same color as the woodwork of a room, because it is more closely connected with its architecture. This also gives a sense of space by making it a part of the walls, as it were. It can be brought into harmony with the other furniture by using the same materials for its cushions and upholstery.

A window seat, built like a box with hinged covers,

## Painted and Built-in Furniture

set across the floor in front of wide windows, can take the place of a divan or sofa. Then with a comfortable mattress on it and upholstered to suit the rest of the furniture in the room, it has real importance. If it is more than three feet long, it is better to have the cover made in two parts so that it will not be too heavy to lift. The box can be made with a floor or bottom, and can be used for storing either summer or winter things, especially if the corners and joints are mouse-proofed with tin.

In building this furniture, get a good design to make it by, a design in good proportion and scaled for the room in which it is placed. A built-in bookcase, for instance, may be made really beautiful if its scale suits the rest of the room and if it is properly situated in the room. The sides of the shelves, their width, height, and length, must be considered when dividing up the spaces of the bookcase. There is no need to set books along in monotonous rows. The length of the shelves may be broken by an upright line, or a small space may be left between two sections of a set of shelves. The ends of the shelf may extend above the level of the top shelf and be shaped to harmonize with the detail of the rest of the woodwork.

Unfortunately, the proportions of the rooms themselves are not always considered when they are built. Some are too high, or too long, or too narrow, and a closet placed in the right position may counteract one of these defects and adjust the pro-

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portions of the room. Perhaps a carefully planned closet at one end of the room will help, if the room is too long for its width. Or an attractive corner cupboard with hinged doors made of window sash with small lights is practical and artistic for the purpose.

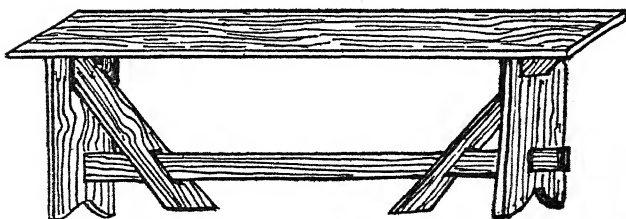
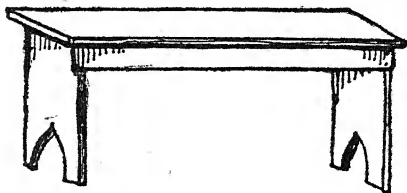
If one has an aptitude for carpentry, it is quite possible to make a table on the model of the refectory tables of the monasteries, which are very long and narrow, and very appropriate in a long narrow room. Or one can make what is technically known as a trestle table, the boards of which are supported at intervals by trestles instead of legs. This is an early American model, but usually made of oak or walnut, not English colonial mahogany. These tables take up much less space, and as food is not now used as a table decoration, but passed around, there does not seem any necessity for much width of board.

If the painted, factory-made tables and chairs are used in rooms with built-in pieces, they may be painted bright, contrasting colors, unless that would bring too much color detail into the room; then these could be painted a contrasting color value. Built-in or painted furniture is sometimes decorated by stencil, or hand-painted with landscapes on the backs, like the little old-fashioned chairs.

Of all the kinds of built-in or painted furniture, the problem of a good bed is really the most serious. The built-in window box couch is well enough, but

## Painted and Built-in Furniture

for permanency a bed without a spring is not comfortable. A very satisfactory way is to get a suspension wire spring and have a frame built with four low posts and sides to hold the spring, instead of the usual foot board and headboard. There are even



*Above: A ready-made bench which can be bought in most department stores.*

*Below: The model for this bench was a really old handmade bench found in an alley way of a tenement in Oxford, England.*

simple designs of bedsteads which can be copied without much expense. A built-in couch or bed can be made very effective if built like two church pews facing each other, with a support underneath to hold the mattress. Or they can be made like high-backed

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benches, one placed against the wall, and the two others facing each other at right angles to the first, and thus surround three sides of a cot bed. These can be used in the living room of a bungalow or a studio, and do not give the suggestion of a bedroom. The high-backed bench is a very decorative feature in a room set beside the chimney or under high windows. It can be most easily made of an ironing table tipped up and held by wooden pins.

A little change is always desirable and it is not without its important effect on the mind as well as on the eye, so if these painted and built-in pieces of furniture, chairs, and benches are to be elaborated, they can be made very comfortable with pads of cretonne or other commercial material. Or the hand-dyed muslins may be used for these coverings. Each chair should have two pads, one for the seat and one for the back of the chair. Or they can be made like slip covers. It is astonishing that more people do not use slip covers over their furniture. They seem to think they are so expensive that they are out of reach because they are too difficult to make, but slip covers can be made easily of very inexpensive materials which will look well and wear well and be a needed change from winter to summer.

The main point in making slip covers is to make the cover in several pieces and not try to fit a chair or sofa in one piece. Make the back as a separate cover, a separate piece for the seat or arms. In this way there is much less difficulty in fitting. Old

## Painted and Built-in Furniture

cretonne curtains can be re-dyed and refreshed and made up into these slip covers, and often the pattern is better for being harmonized with dye. English people cover almost everything in sight with cretonne, even the tables and tops of bureaus. Sometimes one can harmonize odds and ends of furniture by covering it with cretonne. Perhaps a piece of black walnut left over from the household of a mid-Victorian grandmother can be modernized by a cretonne slip cover. First of all, however, it is wise to take a saw and chisel and get rid of some of the overgrown ornaments which delighted that ingenuous period.

## CHAPTER IX

### WINDOWS FROM WITHIN AND WITHOUT

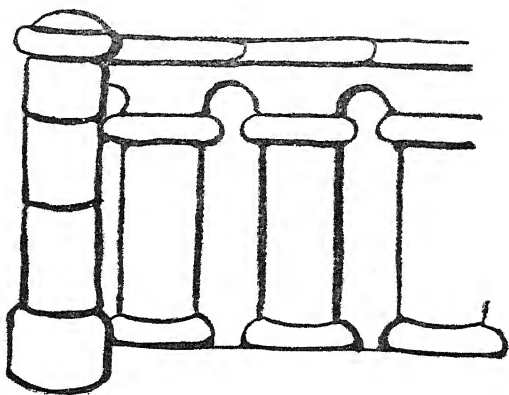


THE decorative appearance of any building can be spoiled or made successful by the setting and arrangement of windows on its outside walls, just as a silhouette of a window can be an important decorative feature from within a room. Our modern architects, especially the architects of our larger business buildings, seem to be extremely successful with their window arrangements. They have been successful because they have frankly taken advantage of modern construction to meet modern requirements, and it is through their work, more than in any other form of art, that present living conditions are courageously reflected.

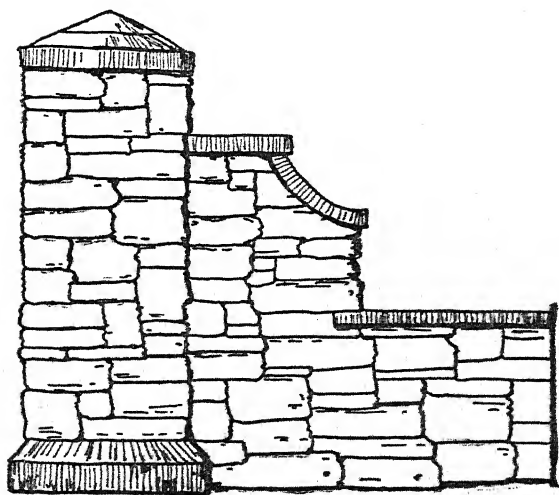
Only lack of investigation limits the variety of window designs which might be carried out in modern architecture. In concrete buildings they can be made any size, shape, or style, which corresponds to the architectural plan—that is, they could if we would treat concrete from the standpoint of its own physical limitations, and not subject it to designs and treatments suitable for stone and wood. The



## Windows from Within and Without



*Cement wall construction.*



*Sample of stone construction.*

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physical construction of concrete requires a new and different treatment. It is not like stone which is formed in strata with natural angles. The only limitation, practically, of concrete designs are the molds into which the concrete is poured before it becomes hardened. As these molds are now being made of metal, there can be no difficulty in getting designs suitable for any kind of decorative construction or ornament.

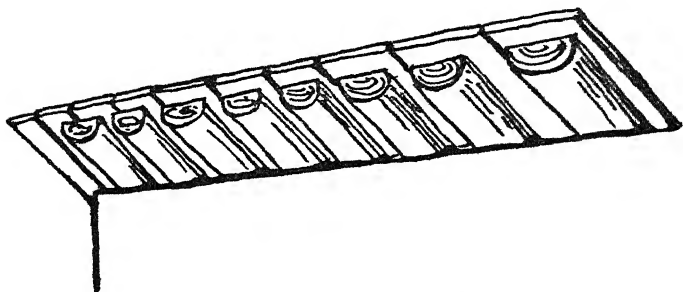
Instances where concrete construction has been designed for its own peculiar characteristics are peculiarly interesting.

In these designs all the forms are either round, or rounded. There are no angles. Angles weaken concrete construction because, having no natural strata like stone, angular concrete can easily be broken off.

Iron construction has done away with the limitations in size or number of windows in a building. The weight of all modern buildings rests on its subcellar foundations and on its interior iron construction which are mathematically adjusted to its weight and height. A modern architect may shoot up a building to almost any height and still practically honeycomb its exterior surfaces with window openings. It takes, however, a long time to adjust ourselves to new conditions in working with materials: with a new material, we do not start afresh, but are hampered by the traditions and limitations of materials formerly used. It seems

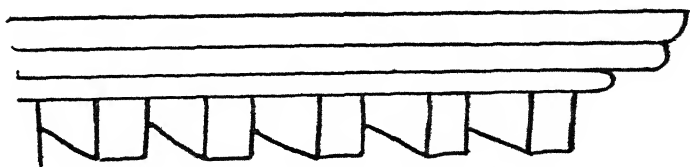
## Windows from Within and Without

difficult to realize that the dentiles made of square blocked tin which form the cornice of our modern apartment houses and business buildings



*Section of roof with overhanging eaves supported by extended roof beams from which the motive of the dentile was developed in as a superficial ornament.*

are the left-overs of another architectural period. Dentiles date from the early architectures where the wooden roof beams extended over the walls of a



*Section of cornice with dentiles of block tin, a non-constructural and merely "ornamental" feature.*

building to hold the projecting eaves, and in this way developed a decorative feature through service.

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In modern architecture, blocked tin dentiles survive only as superimposed ornamentation and imitate a different kind of material. They are not related in any way to the structure of our buildings and they survive only through association in our minds with other types of architecture, and not at all on account of any service or beauty.

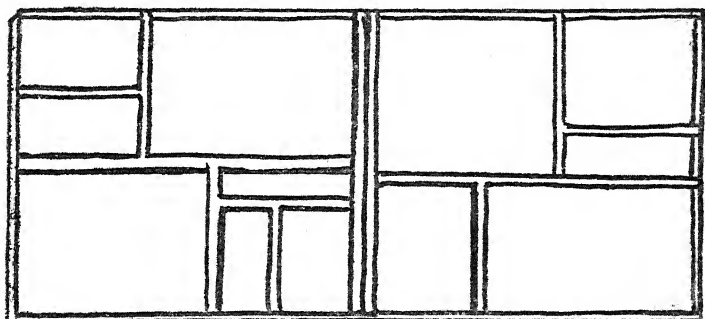
In Gothic architecture the silhouette of the window frame seen against the outside light gives that period a great deal of its characteristic and unusual beauty. The shape of our own modern windows silhouetted against the outside light can be a decorative feature of any room. The size and shape of the window frame which makes the silhouette, and the open spaces, must be treated as a problem in design. The windows of a church, when we see them from the inside with the light shining through them, gives us an idea of how we might adapt this plan effectively to our own houses.

The Anglo-Saxon habit of shutting out sunlight and daylight by pulling down the window shades may come from an unconscious desire to decorate the desolate spaces of plate glass windows. When we see the beauty and variety of the windows in a Venetian palace where no two are exactly alike, we realize that plate glass has but one mission in life—to give an unobstructed view into the show rooms of commercial shops. Perhaps we might add, for the purpose of showing off the contents of a well-lit limousine. In some country houses a view can be

## Windows from Within and Without

framed off like a picture and looked at through a plate glass window, though we rarely see anyone's spending much time looking at the most magnificent view after the host has once shown it to the newly arrived guest.

We think regretfully of the many beautiful old houses which, when reconstructed, lost their small window panes by the substitution of plate glass.



*When one must have plate glass windows, they would be much improved by a frame work of wood overlaying the surface and breaking it into decorative intervals.*

Fortunately, however, the more modern tendency is to get away from large and unbroken window spaces and most designs include some form of decorated window surface. We may not wish to go back to the exceedingly small window panes, but there is no reason, either artistic or technical, except from the point of view of service, why the window spaces of today should be limited either in size or design. It

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is true, though for very different reasons, that large spaces of glass are impracticable, and very small ones also.

There are technical difficulties which come when unusual shaped and sized windows are used, which make them more expensive than ready-made frames. But there are times when just a little more thought and care will give interesting results without much actual expense for the average home builder. Factory-made window sashes can be used and made interesting by placing them in unusual positions in the walls of a building.

A simple type of bungalow can be improved by setting a row of factory-made sashes as high up on the side wall, near the roof plates, as construction will allow. These should not have lights larger than eight by ten inches, or at most eight by twelve. The size of the glass plane should be regulated by the size of the building. Its scale should correspond. A row of sash set this way should follow the longer dimensions of the bungalow, not the gable end, if it has a shed roof. Also, the window sashes themselves should be placed with their longer dimension in a horizontal position.

If the bungalow is placed on a hillside, the high windows should back up against the hill. Under them there can be a built-in settle or window seat with book-shelves above. All the longest dimensions of these furnishings should run parallel to the longest dimension of the windows. Then their struc-

## Windows from Within and Without

tural lines will have the same direction and the design will hold together.

On the opposite side of the room there may be a door, a Dutch door made by setting a window sash



*Stone window showing Gothic tracery.*

in the upper half. This will add a detail of interest and be practical besides, by giving better ventilation plus more of a sense of privacy than an entirely opened door. Other windows may be arranged on

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the usual window levels or even below, especially if the bungalow is near the seashore. The beach and the seashore can almost be brought indoors this way.

In recent years architects and decorators have been making some radical changes in their manner of using leaded glass in windows, but its use has been rather exclusive because of the expense. Many windows have been designed and executed, not in colored glass, but in clear white glass leaded with unusual spacing of the glazed surfaces, unusual only because we are so accustomed to the ready-made eight by ten, or the ten by twelve sized pane. Leaded uncolored glass is one of the most beautiful kinds of window making, and for dwellings no windows seem quite so perfect as some of the late Tudor periods, where large window surfaces are entirely filled with relatively small panes of leaded glass. There is one beautiful window in a small courtyard near Windsor Castle where almost the entire front of the lower floor of a small stone house is made of large, leaded glass windows.

In modern examples of leaded glass, the spacings are often not regular or symmetrical, but arranged with less apparent balance of mass and line. There is no technical reason why leaded glass should follow conventional lines. The leads should act as the constructional lines of any design, and as they are silhouetted against the light they form an ornamental tracery of lines, not limited in style. The window irons hold the glass together.



## Windows from Within and Without

The division spaces of the average window should be considered first of all from their capacity for giving light—the old-fashioned window with its small panes of glass unusually picturesque, not because the panes were small, but because builders of earlier times seemed to sense the correct spacing and proportion of a window opening. A window-opening itself, as well as the size and shape of its frame, must be considered in relation to the outside and inside walls of a building. The wooden window frames need not be of one size and shape except when factory-made. Then they are standardized and the man who makes them and the man who orders them can come to an understanding without decorative complications. One great fault of our present mode of living is an undesirable tendency to standardize, on the assumption that standard sizes are time-savers and money-savers. I doubt if in the end they save anything but creative imagination. If it were possible to have more time at present for living purposes, it would be just as entertaining to think about the size and shape of windows as it would be to think about the cut and style of gowns and hats. There is no reason why one should be treated with less consideration than the other. Suppose that one could think of a house, not only as something to live in, but as something which grows around our living and is therefore more or less a part of ourselves, something which would interpret our thoughts and feelings. We would then be will-

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ing to spend, at least, more time and care in its development. Perhaps it would be wiser, on the whole, to live a little more slowly. To rush through a lot of work that in the end has no meaning practically stops all creative incentive. I once asked a gentleman with whom I was taking tea why he took his without sugar. "I do it," said he, "because I believe in habit. My wife takes hers that way and I do not want to think about the minor things of life." I have not yet heard of the illustrious deeds of this gentleman who took his tea without sugar from the habit of saving time for greater things. If he has done anything great, it has not yet arrived in my zone.

Of course, there are limits to undertaking all the minor details of life in the spirit of a great creative job, but there is only one way to live, and that is to live as one goes along. No one, so far as I know, has yet invented a bank or safe deposit where surplus impulse can be stored up and drawn on later. If we have any left over, it might be as worth while as anything else to spend it in bringing more fun into window making.

## CHAPTER X

### LIGHTS AND LIGHTING



THE old-fashioned chandelier, looked upon as a member of most families, is becoming extinct. This should not be greatly lamented, for it merely centralized light on one part of a ceiling, too high to read by and too low to see by, besides which it destroyed the architecture of almost any room by hanging down from the exact center of its ceiling, arbitrarily dividing it into halves. Then, as most old chandeliers seem to date from some period of ornamental reconstruction, their ambiguous detail does not add anything to their surroundings. But while the antiquated chandelier is passing, its influence still persists and many a room is badly lighted by one electrolier. If lighting fixtures must hang from ceilings, it is much better to have them more toward one end of a room.

In a general way the problem of lighting most rooms is to get first an effect of diffused light by reflecting it indirectly on the ceiling and side walls, and then have certain other lighting arrangements by which light is directly concentrated in spots where it can be used for reading or working. Some lamps

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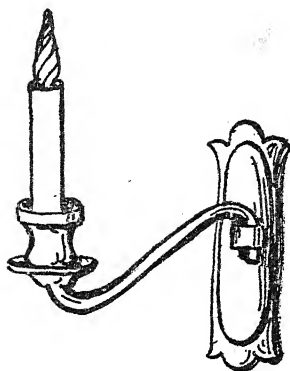
are equipped with a double reflector which can be turned either on the ceiling or thrown down on tables, or both reflectors can be used at once.

Suggestions of how to light a room should come from the character of the room itself, of how it is used. If by many people or for social gatherings, a general lighting effect is necessary. But if it is for family or individual use, there must be ways of concentrating light and of concentrating it so that all the family will be pleased and have a chance to see. Most rooms have been lighted by accident, or by a decorator, and the comforts of each individual member of the family have not been considered. Perhaps there may be only one good place in the room to see to work or read. This is pre-empted by the first fortunate arrival, leaving the late-comers in a disgruntled frame of mind.

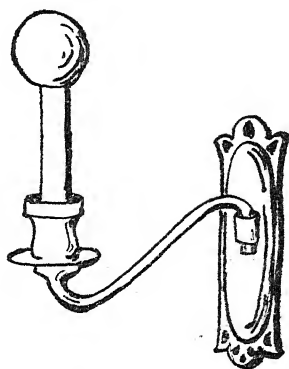
When a house or an apartment is planned by an architect, the outlets for the electric fixtures must be located before the walls are finished. So it is difficult to install a suitable lighting system, because it is best worked out by the people after they have begun to live in the house. Suitable placements for reading lamps, or lamps of any kind, can be developed only in the first place by our own or some one else's imagination, or later by our own use.

Each different room must have its own lighting system developed from its purpose; and the art of good lighting is to follow this closely. For instance, in a kitchen, we want all the light we can get and

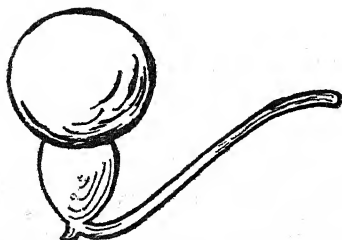
## Lights and Lighting



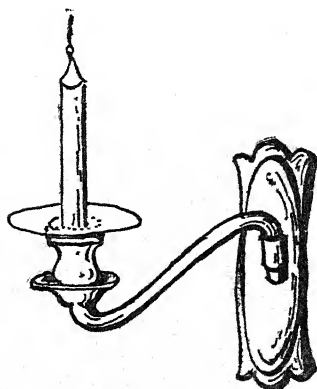
*Electrolier consistently evolved from chandelier.*



*Chandelier—electrolier evolved from handmade side bracket chandelier.*



*Motive for an electrolier: soap bubble pipe with bubble.*



*Handmade bracket chandelier.*

## Everyday Art

light that will penetrate into all corners of closets and cupboards. There is an electric arrangement by which a light is turned on when a door is opened. All closets and storerooms in a house should have this automatic lighting system which makes their contents easy to see. This can be installed in kitchen cupboards and even in ice boxes. In other rooms which are used as workrooms, the sewing room or laundry, the lighting effects can be treated in the same way and should be installed to simulate as nearly as possible a daylight average. The same is true of a bathroom.

Electric light fixtures for the side walls of a room are accepted as the most serviceable and pleasing lightings, with floor or table lamps for special places. But any "light plot," as they say in the theater, must in the end be modified by the taste and opinions of individuals, who unfortunately sometimes place more emphasis on ornamental effects than on the quality of real service.

There are also many ways of lighting a room indirectly by concealing the lights. Sometimes an effect can be gotten in a large room by a row of lights hidden in a cornice or around the top of a column or pilaster which is hollowed out to fit the lamps. These methods give a very pleasing effect of diffused light, but they are expensive and, like other expensive problems, are solved only by those who are able to pay for them. The person of average means has to buy ready-made, commercial lighting

## Lights and Lighting

fixtures, and the only thing which helps the situation is to use taste and discrimination in their choice and great care in selecting their position in a room.

Defects in the architecture of a room can be modified by the placement of its light fixtures. If a room has too high a ceiling, its height can be lessened by placing the side brackets low down on the wall and shading them so that they cannot send any light on the ceiling. In this way the top of the room is foreshortened by being made darker. Or height can be added to a low ceiled room by placing lights near the top of the side walls and throwing the ceiling into prominence. The designs used in making electric light fixtures are somewhat influenced by our former associations with candles and lamps, and we see combinations of candles and electric lamps where an electric bulb sits composedly and unashamedly on top of an artificial candle, resembling nothing so much as an illuminated egg.

But the most daring experiments are the home-made lamp shades which might be readily mistaken for a ballet costume or a garden hat. For these, as they are suffering from a bad case of over-ornamentation, the lampshade doctor, like the hat doctor, would recommend the pruning shears. If we want lampshades to look well, we must choose them with reference to the other objects in our rooms. They must harmonize in color and in form with the other groups of furnishings of which they are a part. Someone gets an idea of making a lampshade, not

## Everyday Art

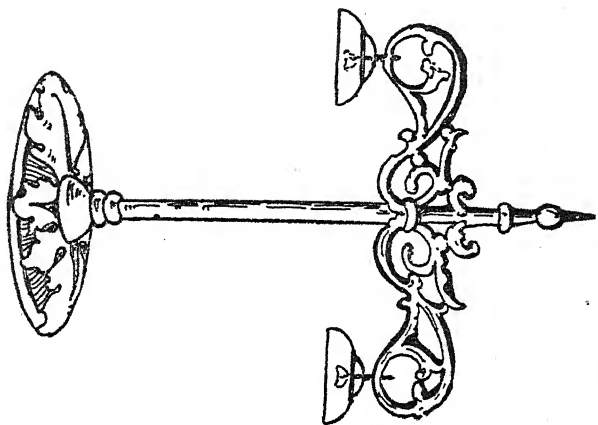
of how to make a lampshade, but because it happens to be the season when everyone who is socially inclined is making them. A crop of irresponsible lampshades is the result. It is a fine idea to make one's own lampshades, but it is better to think a little of how they are going to look in the room in which they are to be used, not just start in without any connection with it.

First, we have to think of the kind of a lamp base which we have and get something which goes with it. The lampshade and the base have to go with each other in shape, size, and kind of ornament. The same principles of design apply to them as to anything else. Perhaps the base has a good deal of detail on it and it needs suppressing. Then just the right amount of detail on the shade will make it less conspicuous. Or perhaps the detail of the base is timid and needs encouragement. Then the lampshade must not be too over-powering or put it entirely out of countenance. A perfectly plain shade on an over-decorated base would, by contrast, throw the detail on the base only into greater relief. In a general way, the base is the more structural feature of a lighting fixture and the shade the more ornamental, and the idea is to get the two adjusted so as to form a related group.

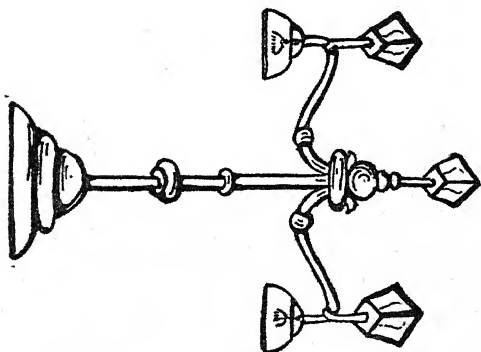
A room is dependent on lighting for its final decorative effect, and a poor system can spoil even the most successful color scheme, though in the matter of colored lights we are less limited by commercial



## Lights and Lighting



*Chandelier-gasolier gives us a good deal of jigsaw ornament but not much light.*



*Chandelier—gasolier—  
electrolier.*

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technicalities. 'As in the theater, light effects may be substituted for paint, and the color of a scene or the color in a room may be changed by the use of colored lights. By selecting the right kind of shades for our electric lamps and side fixtures, whether direct or indirect, we can immensely improve the color of our rooms. For instance, if a room with gray walls needs more warm color, it can be introduced by using orange- or gold-colored shades, or even pink, though pink is the easiest and most bromidic way of harmonizing dinner tables and rooms; it seems too obvious to suggest except in extreme situations.

Charming effects in side-lights can also be had by using shades which will reflect practically the same color as is on the walls of a room. The side brackets can be arranged singly or in groups without introducing spots of color which when different from the walls would make entirely too much color detail. The trouble with side-lights is that people are too apt to install them at regular intervals around the walls of a room, whereas they do not have to be used singly, but can be arranged in groups and in irregular intervals.

Sometimes a room is much more charming when it is not evenly lit, when some parts are left in shadow, others emphasized by lights. Doubtless, if one should take a referendum vote on the most beautiful kind of lighting, candle light would come out ahead. The tradition that our great-grandmothers

## Lights and Lighting

were all beauties probably had its origin in the fact that they appeared dressed in their best at parties in candle-lit rooms. And we still use candles, for they add charm to the room and the people in it, though they are expensive and not altogether practical. Our choice of candles is not limited to the bayberry or the tallow dip perfumed with spearmint to conceal the odor of the mutton fat. Candles now, more than ever, add their quota to the decoration of any room, especially when colored wax is used in their making. White candles, or pure wax candles, sometimes add just the right note to a room. A slight difference in the color of a candle is such a mere detail that it does not seem to need real consideration, but I remember once changing the color of the candles on the background of a yellow room from a pure white to a real yellow wax candle which, because it suppressed a certain amount of color detail, made all the difference in the general appearance of the room.

If we wish to make our candles inconspicuous, we can match the color of our walls so closely that we get merely little points of light at the top of the candle, hardly showing the candle itself at all. Then, too, there is no reason why we should use all the same colored candles in one room. I have seen red, green, and white candles most successfully arranged to emphasize the colors of a room where light reflected on a gold-bronze wall paper made a background of changing tones. The red candles

## Everyday Art

were used in the darker corners of the room where the shadows were deeper and had more color tone, the green nearer the windows, and the white on the table where they were still more exposed to view. Color in candles and candle shades, like everything else, cannot be selected by arbitrary rules, but must be chosen for each situation. And not only color, but sizes and lengths. Small candles would not make an impressive altar decoration unless used in numerically large quantities, and altar candles would dwarf most rooms. The colored candle and electric shades have also to be seen when in daytime they are unlit. Almost any color harmonizing with the rest of the furnishings can be used, because the lights can be changed or modified by the linings or interlinings through which it shines when lit.

There will be enormous progress made in the next few years in the lighting problem. At present it seems difficult to install electric wires in a house which was not equipped while building, without tearing down or disfiguring the walls. At any rate, it costs much to have the right kind of wiring, for the kind that is strung on the outside wall surfaces is only a makeshift. These difficulties will, doubtless, soon be overcome by wireless lighting currents, and in the meantime we can use our imagination in preparing fixtures which will keep pace æsthetically with the marvels of electrical inventions.

## CHAPTER XI

### MAKING YOUR OWN HOME



HERE is a big difference between feeling that we know what we want and in really knowing it. And the best safeguards against making mistakes when building a home are good taste and common sense. Pretensions to fashion or to the picturesque usually sacrifice a comfortable interior to an ornamental exterior. A carefully considered plan for comfortable living usually works out in good taste. We may not be accustomed to picture our ideas to ourselves. If we are, we are somewhat unusual, and more unusual if we know that we are unable to get a picture in our minds of what we want. But if we tell our needs, one by one, to the trained professional they can be set up in one good, consistent plan.

We must be careful what we want, because we might really get it. We may have certain ideas which we really would not want if we knew how they would look in enduring stone, or brick, or wood. These are fairly permanent mediums and may last longer than our first enthusiasm for the ideas we

## Everyday Art

have of a new home. If we carry them out, we would have to live with them long after our ardor for them has cooled.

The average modern house is built as a real estate investment and it is mostly a commercial product. It is built to make us think that we are getting a lot for our money and that depends on our amiability more than on our imagination. Ready-to-wear houses usually combine the striking features of many schools of architecture in one exterior and featureless interiors are the result. After folks have lived in a house of this kind for a while, they realize that they do not altogether fit in their surroundings, that they are not living in the house in which they belong, and they begin to make changes. This really costs more than suiting ourselves in the first place, and spoils the fun of having our own way.

After we tell our needs to our expert, we can then find out if all of them can be confined under the same roof. In the enthusiasm of getting our own home, we may ask for more things than can comfortably "co-operate" in one house. There must be some things more necessary than others. These must come first and then we can see what becomes of the rest. There will be enough left to make a house. There are always compromises in any plan and the best plan will unite the most essential features.

We may be shocked to hear the price of a mere plan. That is possibly because we are not used to

## Making Your Own Home

paying for professional work. But there are always average professional rates for any kind of work. If we find out what they are, that will protect us. Any reasonable charge will be a better bargain than making "original" mistakes in construction and style. Houses, like clothes, do not wear well unless they fit, and there is much more in good fitting than mere physical comfort. It is a feeling which most of us who wear ready-to-wear clothes cannot always analyze. Houses which lack our individuality, and consequently are not distinctive, do not altogether satisfy us any more than ready-to-wear clothes, because they do not express us. And clothes and houses which do not suit us do not wear well, because we are not interested in caring for them. We care for what we like and are sorry when our favorite dresses wear out.

In hunting an expert to make a plan, we may unearth a professional autocrat, one who does not know that it is better business to help us to define our own needs and make up our mind than it is to insist on having his own way. This professional expert thinks he knows exactly what we want and can express our needs in French, Gothic, or any other period of untimely architecture, before we have said a word. We will end in only being confused by endless blue-prints, for nothing is more bewildering than the blue-print of a house plan to one who knows nothing about it. The prospective house owner sits with the blue-print spread out and

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all its confusing little marks going around in his head, not daring to ask a question or be frank enough to say that he hasn't the slightest idea of what it all means. Perhaps he has brought "Mother" along to see the plans of their future home, and she, knowing that no man will ever ask a question if he can avoid it, timidly advances an inconsequential inquiry. Being promptly rebuked, she subsides from long practice. The imperial professional continues his program of a kitchen for her to work in, or for some other woman to work in, size seven by eight, with stationary tubs, gas range, patent ash chutes, enameled ice boxes, and movable sinks. Here, he points out on the plan, is one master bedroom, here is another, and the victim who has never heard this term wonders how many masters are going to live in this house. Then, continuing, he adds bath rooms innumerable, and servants' quarters, two by four each, under the little eaves. Here "Mother" rebels and says she knows Clementine who has worked for them for two whole years won't stand for a two by four room, and everything is brought to a standstill.

We really must insist on getting what we want in our own homes. We are going to live in them. So don't let us get worried, but insist on an explanation of the mysterious blue-print, or change your architect. There are some excellent ideas that we have always wanted to carry out, ideas that might be practical and some of them even humane. For in-



## Making Your Own Home

stance, we believe that some ideals cannot be attained in the city, and in spite of the great inconvenience of commuting, for the children's sake, we want a suburban place to live in. Certainly, for the average growing-up family there seems to be more room for mental and physical expansion by living in the semi-country. We say we want a children's playroom in the top of the house where they can go any time they are at leisure, have their own things about them, and where they can make all the noise their hearts desire without being asked to stop, because noise ascends rather than descends. So though it may seem like turning the world upside down, we begin to plan our house by starting with the attic. We are furnishing only the ideas and our expert can bring them into proper order. There is really little need for a storage attic in the modern house. If we have learned one of the great lessons of modern times, where conditions change so rapidly, we will have only the things we need for use. Then there will be no attic filled with the jumbled relics of former homes. Everything in the house will have a purpose. It is wonderful, as the Germans say "*wonderschoen*," to have a home without the uncomfortable consciousness of knowing that some day the attic or this or that closet must be looked over and its contents given away.

The cellar of the most modern type is a good understudy for the attic and all its needs, a concreted, electric-lighted, damp-proof cellar. It is cer-

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tainly much more practical to store trunks in a cellar, and much less trouble to carry them up and down one flight of stairs. Then even the visitor with the trunk the size of a young house, who has come to stay only a few days, will be welcome, for all the clothing can be transferred, tray by tray, by the maids, to the closets and bureaus of the guest room. Then the arrival of the most beloved and entertaining visitor, who but for the trunk would have been entirely welcome, will be an occasion for real enjoyment, and after her departure, will not be remembered by the scratches her trunk made on the balustrade of the stairway or on the freshly tinted walls.

The children's room need not occupy the whole attic. The servant problem would be a little less acute if servants had comfortable and livable quarters near by and all on the same floor. Attractive rooms of their own will keep them in better health and humor until by the art of higher living we get rid entirely of their uncertain service.

There should be one guest room always in order for the visitor who finds one-night stands in the homes of others more attractive than the luxurious sameness of her own. If two bathrooms can be managed, have one connected with the visitors' room. For though our conversation may be modern enough to be entertaining, and our cook an expert, the idea of sharing a bathroom with the entire family quickly palls on the person of temperament.

## Making Your Own Home

Unless on an ocean liner, where strict régime is necessary, one dreads peeping out in the halls for an unconventional meeting of dressing-gowns. There can be an extra bathroom in the up-to-date cellar with a shower for father when he comes in from golf or from working in the garden on hot evenings.

Our American custom of using the bedroom as library, sitting room, and all other rooms in one, makes a large room necessary. The relatively smaller other bedrooms are, the better they are, for in reality the bedroom should only be a sleeping room, and though it need not be so severe and simple as the average European bedroom, with its white cell-like walls and simple furniture, our American extravagance can certainly be curtailed in this regard.

Be sure to have enough windows and not too many doors. A floor space should not be cut up like a checker-board and bring us constantly up against a wall. Where there is no outlook and no possibility of quaint nooks and corners no unexpected turns to interest and charm, we feel shut in and restricted.

But all these are only suggestions to stir our ideas into action. They are not meant in any way to limit the expression of our personality, which would make our surroundings a reflection of ourselves. The points are emphasized only because they are the ones usually treated in the most conventional manner. But a home is a fairly permanent thing, at least, so we think when we make our first move.

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It is, at any rate, built with ideas of permanency and permanent materials, and so it is necessary to take thought on all four sides before the corner-stone is laid.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE CHILDREN'S ROOM



THE ordinary child has quite enough imagination to furnish a playroom for itself, but it is usually not allowed to have much to say about the things it lives with because some grown-up decides "what is best" for it, and children accept things without protest in the simple way which makes them so endearing. I know a most devoted mother, almost too devoted, who assumes practically all responsibility for her children's actions and never gives them a chance to mature through their own mistakes. I once heard her say about Christmas time that she thought she would ask Aunt Marie to give Willy a small rocking chair for the sitting-room. Imagine the "hit" this made with Willy who being Auntie's pet began around the fourth of July to entertain Christmas visions of squirt guns and airplanes.

Almost anyone would ask, "How could a child furnish its own room and what do children know about furnishing?" They may not in truth know very much, but they might have ideas which would have the refreshing advantage of not being ours.

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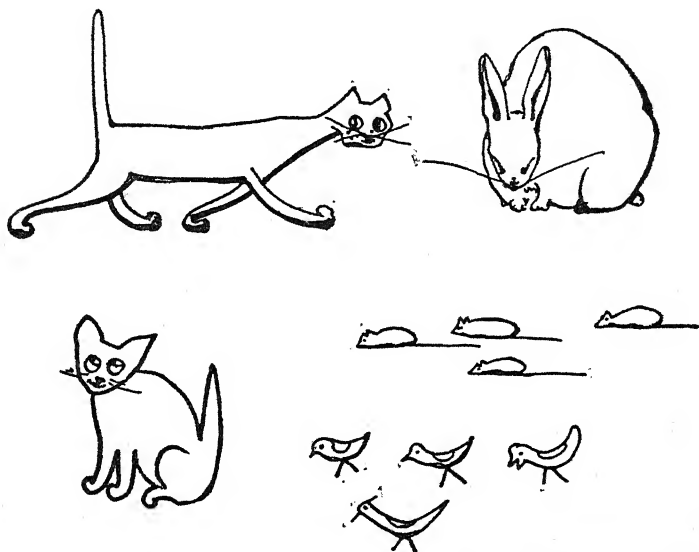
Most parents think they own their children and can even think for them. However, the average man or woman's ideas of house furnishing are not worth any great permanency; and they are usually in a worse fix than the child, because they do not know what they want whereas the child does. Most of us reach "years of discretion" without having found out what we really want.

In some families it has long been the custom to give children a playroom of their own, entirely devoted to their activities, good or bad. There they can do what they like if they put up with what they do. If they carve the window-sill and hammer nails in the doors, the nails and the carvings stay as a memorial. And what method of teaching children could be more organic and direct than to let them take the immediate consequences of their actions? What could teach them more simply the necessary lesson of self control?

When I was a child, we had an old room near the barn evidently meant in other times for the storage of tools. This was given over to us as our playroom. We didn't have very much in it, only a very large wooden mantel-piece which we had found in the barn. This was our pride and joy, and anyone who was fortunate enough to be invited to our playroom was led up and introduced to "Jennie." We never explained why we called it "Jennie" and I doubt if we knew, but the chosen few who entered never inquired.

## The Children's Room

In the modern restricted home the "run-away-and-play" idea does not work out very well, because there is no place to run to and less space to play in. The modern apartment, with the limited space that



*If children were left to themselves, they might like their walls decorated with a stealthy cat, an innocent kitten, a gentle rabbit, a flock of mice, or a few easy-to-draw birds.*

most of us afford, has space only for exercise of the perpendicular variety. But after all, the home does belong to the grown-ups, so they will have to decide which room can be given up for the playroom. In the country the problem settles itself, but in the city

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it is different. It might be the dining-room off the end of a long hall, and the sitting-room could be used as living room and dining-room in one, for that can be done, even if it is a long way from the kitchen. There are ways of keeping food hot by covers, or by serving it in the casserole in which it is cooked. And in the end steps will be saved when we do not have to run every minute to see what the children are doing in this room or that, and we need not have them on our mind—only in our hearts.

Now that the room has been chosen, the children may give us some suggestions for the furnishings. They won't mind old furniture as long as they have plenty of floor space, some strong chairs, and steady tables. Too much furniture does not help our imaginations, and the great men and women of the world are those who had a chance to let their imaginations work when they were children. I remember a family of rich children who had a superfluity of toys. Their Mamma, an exceedingly efficient lady, periodically suggested that they should get rid of some of them by giving them to their less fortunate friends, so every once in a while they cleared them out. Filling the limousine with the less favored toys, they went off to visit children less wealthy than themselves. One day they visited the home of a little boy and girl to whom they were to give some of their toys and found the boy playing with an old pair of wheels—just wheels—there was no cart or wagon. Going home in the limousine the little boy of the party



## The Children's Room

sighed a large sigh, "Gee, Mother," said he, "I wish I had that old pair of wheels."

So you can give the children cast-off chairs and tables. What they do need is cheery, colored walls, walls on which they can paste a few things without being reprimanded, and above everything else, plenty of sunshine. They will soon realize that this room is theirs and will be interested in getting things to use in it.

Of course, an attic is an ideal place for a children's room. There is always a glamour and romance about an attic because it is different from what they are accustomed to. And then there is a sense of being off by oneself which has much more fascination than the consciousness of being actually alone.

The children's playroom may also be their study room; and many lessons may be taught there in play as well as by study. They should have their own brooms, and other tools and utensils for keeping their room in order when the time for order comes. A certain wise young mother always enters into the spirit of play with her children. One day her two little boys had been playing "circus horses," and the pieces of paper they had used as entrance tickets for the performance were scattered all over the floor. Mamma appeared and asked them if they had finished their play, and, if they had, why the papers had not been picked up. "But Mamma," said one of them, "horses can't pick up papers." "Oh, yes," answered Mamma, "trick horses can,"

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and the papers were at once picked up as part of the game.

So to play the game with them is best, even letting them play at the decoration of their room. If they upset our habits it would hardly be a misfortune, while if we curb their imagination it is almost a crime. They will succeed in expressing just as much art as they know, if we will just let them try to do it.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE KITCHEN AND THE KITCHENETTE



IF most cooks are cross, there is certainly a reason. But there is no reason why the art of arrangement should not penetrate into the recesses of the kitchen or kitchenette and make them attractive and convenient places in which to work. One really wonders how cooks are successful when they so often have to live and work in dingy, uncomfortable, and unlovely kitchens.

When one does one's own work, there is the modern kitchenette where one only has to turn on a stool to take something from the table and set it on the electric stove, or get a pan of biscuit ready for baking and, without moving, put it in the oven; also where all four sides of this closet kitchen are within easy reaching distance of the ice box, the self-opening garbage pail, and the fireless cooker, and where efficiency reigns supreme and imagination is not needed.

On the other hand, there is the old-fashioned country kitchen where the family lives and has its meals. I can think of a New England kitchen, a

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great, big, sunny room with a hospitable looking stove perfectly polished, a comfortable, old-fashioned rocking chair, rag carpets and hand-made rugs on the floor, white curtains and red geraniums at the window—in fact, a real place to live, where, strange to say, the odor of cooking did not seem to be unpleasant or predominating. (Or was it that the food smelled so good one didn't mind?)

When professional artists do our cooking, it will be done in a scientifically fitted work room, probably somewhat like a laboratory. This will not be difficult either to imagine or to get. Its parts all exist now; they need only to be assembled. But unless this kind of kitchen is co-operative, it is out of reach of most of us at present. And there is a prejudice, perhaps a just one, against co-operative meals. People who have lived in large apartment houses which have centralized kitchens seem to get as tired of them as others do of hotel living. It seems to be a kind of standardized food eaten in private. The danger is in mixing things. You can take or leave a completed state of anything as it appeals to you. It is the transition state which is difficult, for half measures are as confusing as compromises.

Things today are being constantly scrapped to make way for more modern conditions, so we often misjudge the situation and get rid of a thing which has not outlived its usefulness. It may not be the thing which we, as very modern persons, might need or want, but everybody in the world is not moving

## The Kitchen and Kitchenette

along at the same rate, for the world does not move in one piece. Progress is local and uneven, and there may be living conditions, considered obsolete now, which may later better fit into our philosophies than some which have not long been tested by acquaintance and use.

Today the intermediary step between the modern kitchenette and the country kitchen or the professional laboratory is found in suburban conditions. One day you have a maid and the next you do your own cooking. And there, for very different reasons, the well-to-do are about as badly off as anybody. They are really more in need of help and comfort than the owners of an up-to-date kitchenette, or of the sitting-room kitchen in the isolated country.

These intermediate kitchens should be made attractive to the women who, if only occasionally, have to get three meals a day. There must be at least some diversions for them. As the sewing machine and the dress form are the tools which make the sewing room unsightly, the stove is more of a problem than other kitchen tools or utensils. The over-ornamentation of stoves seems to increase in ratio to their size and price. There is no such thing as an artistic looking cast-iron stove, nickel plate ornaments notwithstanding. It is yet to be made. Of course, there is always the screw driver, and any one blessed with courage and ingenuity can remove the manufacturer's name plate, the stove's baptismal name, and a few other oddities. The greatest idea

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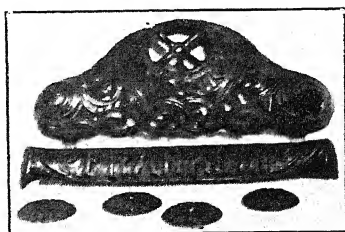
of all is to remove the feet and set the stove up on another kind of foundation. Hollow tiles will do excellently for this purpose. Set its back and sides on a base of tiles, leaving the front open. Then it can be raised to suit, as most stoves are too low for tall cooks, and it is tragic to keep on year after year breaking one's back over a low stove—or a low kitchen sink. The legs of any stove are one of its most objectionable features; by suppressing them and supporting the stove with a foundation it becomes quite another thing.

The hollow tiles can be painted with water-proof color in some attractive tone of red or other color suggestive of the natural material. Or they can be faced up with glazed or unglazed tiles which make the stove entirely presentable. In European countries tile stoves are not unseemly objects, but are usually very becoming to the kitchen. In some Northern countries the stove is built in a corner of the room something in the shape of our corner cupboards, only of stone, of course, and with the opening for the fire. The fire, therefore, is on a stone ledge about eighteen inches up. An iron grill is placed over it for cooking. It looks like an elevated fireplace and usually its chimney shows partly on the inside, which adds another very attractive feature. It holds together with the architecture of the room and does not stand out conspicuously like the usual shiny stove and stovepipes.

It is more fun to wash your dishes in a blue



*With courage, ingenuity and the assistance of a screw-driver; this little Franklin stove lost its baptismal name, the manufacturer's name plate and a few other oddities.*



*The useless and unbecoming "ornaments" which were removed by the screw-driver.*





## The Kitchen and Kitchenette

Spanish earthenware bowl than in an agate dishpan, and to cook in earthen casseroles which are quaint in themselves and presentable for serving at table. These casseroles save washing of cooking utensils because food can be cooked and served in the same utensil. It takes a little more experience to use them, but the coal stove is ideal for them. There are also copper cooking utensils which though more expensive are more durable, lasting a lifetime or more. Copper and brass, however, require much care because they are attractive only when polished; but the brilliantly polished surfaces of the metals add enormously to the appearance of a kitchen. Both these types of tools can be kept where you can see them, either hung on the wall or in rows on open kitchen shelves.

The color scheme of a kitchen should have as much consideration as any room in the house. Some colors have become more or less wedded to kitchen walls and woodwork, like the usual blue-and-white scheme. But the idea that white is more cleanly than anything else is not altogether true. For example, dust is generally gray and shows much more on dark woodwork than on white or light colors. Bright tones on the woodwork, bright green, blue, or yellow, which contrast with walls of a lighter tone, are just as suitable as white. This is not necessarily a monotone arrangement—that is, not a lighter tone of the same color on the walls as on the woodwork, but a different color altogether.

## Everyday Art

More color can be introduced into the kitchen by using brilliantly colored curtains and table runners. Also window shades of colored chintz can be substituted for the plain holland. Further, quaint and picturesque shades can be made of table oilcloth, and these have the advantage of being fast to sunlight. It comes in all kinds of colors, plain and figured, and the figured ones are printed in many delightful patterns. We are not any more tied down to the old kind of patterns in imitation lace effects. Then the kitchen furniture can be painted in attractive colors and a high-backed old-fashioned rocker added for comfortable repose when the cook is waiting for some process to mature, as she who sits and waits does also cook. Then if we are really humane, we can have a smallish cushion dedicated to the service of the kitchen cat; even if it is only a china cat, it may help us relax through association of ideas.

There are many schemes which can be supplied to kitchens and the only reason why our kitchen decoration has not been successful is that we have considered it as a place disconnected from the rest of the house. When we realize that our kitchens, like our sewing rooms or living rooms, should be suitably decorated, we will use any color scheme which is suitable for the kind of room the kitchen happens to be. Because the kitchen is a place where our food is cooked, it should be a place where we would be willing to have a visitor enter unprepared without making excuses for it.

## The Kitchen and Kitchenette

Usually, the only time when a kitchen is thoroughly fit is when the cook has left suddenly and we are preparing a cordial and clean reception for the new incumbent. Then we have courage to go into all the nooks, crannies, cupboards, and poke into holes which we could not investigate while cook was in possession. We find many disagreeable surprises which after all we cannot blame entirely upon the cook or the kitchen.

Modern science is making progress every day in the study of food values and in the scientific preparation of foods. We should, at least, make an effort to combine this progress with problems of practical housekeeping by preparing the rooms to work and live in as carefully and appropriately as we can. This will give our imagination in regard to these things a chance to grow. And if we find that order cannot be had all over the house, we shall be fair enough not to blame it on the cook.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE TRANSFORMED SEWING ROOM



THE sewing room, like the kitchen, is a shop where a special craft is carried on, and its appearances and character are determined by the tools necessary for work. There are, after all, not many tools needed in a sewing room, but if they are arranged harmoniously, that room can be transformed from a kind of magnified scrap basket, used by all members of the house as a discard, into a pleasant place in which to work.

First of all, clean out the room and clear it up by decorating the sidewalls and the ceilings and selecting the covering or stain for the floor, according to some approved color scheme. You may as well do it all at once, for the day will come when these things will surely be necessary, and if you begin from the bottom up with a plan, you find that your decorations will last longer. Even if it chances to be a sunny room, there are dark days and early evenings in winter when artificial light must be used, so walls and ceiling should reflect all the light possible. The safest tone for them is a warm, light

## The Transformed Sewing Room

yellow, more like the tone of manilla wrapping paper than anything else. The ceiling can be a light cream color and the woodwork may have a deeper tone of yellow.

In the traditional sewing room a threadbare carpet covered with an old sheet to protect it from the clinging and scattered threads, can hardly add to the decorative beauty of the room. The floor is better if not carpeted, but if a rug is needed, a small mat can be used under one's feet when one sits still. Varnished wood, wood carpet, oilcloth, linoleum, all make it possible to clean the floor with ease.

The indispensable tools for this craft shop are; first of all, a sewing machine; then a large mirror, one with two wings if possible, or a cheval glass, to lessen the danger of twisting one's neck off trying to see ourselves as others see us, or to save running into another room to get the back view of a garment in process of making.

If there are no closets with doors in the room, some may be built in; also others with open shelves to hold materials. These can be draped with curtains. It is much handier to lay away a piece of unfinished work on a shelf than to put it on a table which should be kept clear for cutting. The sewing room is an excellent place for the linen closet, for when the linen comes from the laundry it must at any rate be kept in this room until it is mended and returned to its respective owners. This linen closet should have the lower half made of open shelves,

## Everyday Art

and the upper half with a door which lets down like a writing desk on rachets, so as to come toward one and form an extended shelf on which linen may be laid while being sorted.

There should be no window hangings, only a shade, which, as in the establishments of professional dressmakers, reversing the usual order of window shades, pulls from the bottom up rather than from the top down. We should take such suggestions as we may from professional people who have spent their time and thought on finding the most efficient way of doing their work rooms. It seems almost as if the human mind must always begin at the bottom and repeat the experiences of others. The shades of the sewing room windows hung upside down let in all the light there is and screen the lower part of the window. Then our neighbors cannot make imitation of our new gowns, and only those above us, like the crows or the angels, can see in. A screen would be another good asset in a sewing room.

No sewing machine is really attractive looking and it is always better anyway when protected from dust, so a machine with a sunken top can be neatly concealed with a slip cover of some gay and interesting cretonne, or other material used to furnish the room. When the machine is not in use, it may serve as a temporary table.

The lighting in the sewing room should be a bowl shaped electric fixture with strong lights for gen-

## The Transformed Sewing Room

eral work, no side lights, and for other light an attachable lamp which can be used in any convenient position. Then there should be a large cutting table. These recommendations may seem professional and exacting, but there must be every facility for doing any work that is to be well done.

There should be a large basket or two and some bags for scraps, and boxes covered with cretonne to match the hangings. Covering boxes with cretonne makes them stronger, and using the same cretonne as for the other furnishings of the room suppresses a certain amount of detail and makes the entire room more restful. These boxes can be filled with odds and ends left over from the making of gowns and other garments.

For the woman of discrimination who likes to have everything around her beautiful, nothing is more of a problem than the usual dressmaker's form on which to fit gowns. It is so uncompromisingly ugly and nondescript in character, with its covering of musty black paper muslin or stockinet; or, if one aspires to richness of effect, there is a dress form made up in unseemly pink satin, costing more money, but in worse taste because it is so pretentious and so obviously bad looking. A great deal of progress has been made by commercial manufacturers in these dress forms, but none except the well-known kind is very practical for home consumption. Ugly though they be, they are an absolute necessity, for one never has a convenient time

## Everyday Art

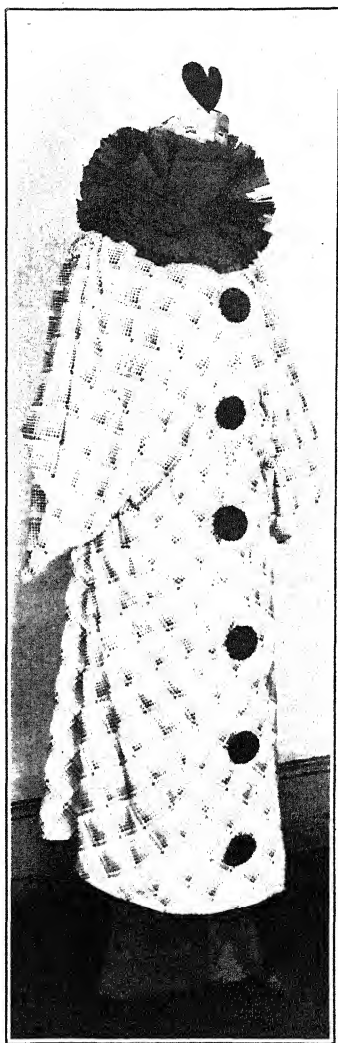
for trying on clothes, as engagements for breakfast, dinner, and tea interfere with the fittings that no self-respecting dressmaker thinks she can do without. Then, too, the fitting form saves the wear and tear on one's temper, and on poor Miss Jones who, when you are about ready to faint, exhorts you to patience, with her mouth full of pins. Or perhaps one has been unfortunate and has to use the extension variety of dress form which accommodatingly fits the varying waist measures of the family, and if one lives where rents do not permit a separate sewing room, the helpless dress form, shorn of her temporary finery, is quartered on some protesting but defenseless member of the household.

As we cannot do without one, it is just as well to make it interesting. Most women say, "It is not worth while to fuss so much over such an inconsequent thing," and keep the eyesore around. But isn't it true that until we connect up beauty with every commonplace thing our imaginations will dry up and we shall not be able even to clothe ourselves properly? Why should we let our imaginations lag in this matter, especially when we have so much to help us? We do not have to pioneer, for professional dressmakers and modistes, and hat makers do their utmost to show off their goods by making the surroundings for them attractive. We certainly ought to be willing to do as much for our private living places. Commercial houses have made wonderful advances in window display. And one real-





*The dress form as a dull  
nonentity of indetermi-  
nate character.*



*Dressed in a domino with some  
imagination and great effect  
but with little time and effort.*



## The Transformed Sewing Room

izes the difference between the fascinating hand-painted heads which under the nom de plume of Lizette, Nanon, or Susan, wear smart hats in modish shops, and the simpering wax-faced doll of mid-Victorian ancestry.

When we see the care and thought with which the large cloak houses, dressmakers, tailors, and milliners choose their live models, and the importance they attach to good looks, we realize afresh how necessary it is to try our own clothes on a substitute relatively attractive and encouraging to them.

The new transformation plan would involve little expense, just a mask and a fancy ball domino made of colored cretonne or muslin. Any bright colors of medium tone are more practical for the domino than either very light or very dark colors. Dark and light colors show dust and soil more, and one does not want to do away with one problem only to find another confronting one—that of caring for the dress form's clothes.

The domino is made according to the regulation pattern for costume parties, but should fit closely about the neck, as the crude dress form has not a beautiful skin and cannot wear a décolleté garment. The head can be made of black or dark gray velvet or velveteen. It can be cut from a large circle twenty-four inches in diameter, and the circle then cut in half, with the outer edges or the round part of the circle sewed together so as to form a half circle when finished. The straight line at the bot-

## Everyday Art

tom of the half circle should not measure more than eighteen inches across. This half circle is to be gathered together like a bag and filled with sawdust or cotton. Then the stuffed head can be sewed on the shoulders of the dress form. Do not make the head any larger than in the directions given. Large heads look ungainly, and will not serve for trying your hats. The hand-painted heads of the modiste's decorative model are usually less than life size.

Next get a mask from the theatrical costumer, just the regular one-colored mask, with the little piece of semicircular linen to cover the lower part of the face. If one has any luck, these masks can be found sometimes in the five and ten cent stores. Choose a mask of decided coloring, or black may be effective. Bright colored ribbon can be sewed on the mask to tie it around the head. The mask gives the effect of concealing a supposed face and no painting of features is necessary. The domino can easily be slipped on and off for fittings.

One can, of course, make the dress form into as interesting a person as imagination and time will allow. With a little treatment, she certainly repays in full the trouble taken. From a dull nonentity of indeterminate character, called only by generic names like Mary Ann, or Sally Jane, she may assume a distinctive personality and one might have a christening party and give her a name which is individually descriptive of the perfect figure, such as Venus-Anna Domino.

## CHAPTER XV

### BUILDING OVER AN OLD HOUSE



UR cities have become stopping places for foot-loose travelers, and hotels for the transient rich. So if anyone has money to spend on a home, it is more satisfactory to make it in the suburbs or real country. For what city dweller can own anything more than a few clothes, unless it be a cross-section of a co-operative apartment where each individual liveth alone unto himself, abhorring neighbors!

But if we decide to move, there are two things we can do: build a new house or remodel an old homestead. Most advisers will say, "Don't take over an old house, for you will never be through making it over." That may be so, but that is part of the fun.

With imagination, we can see possibilities and may pick up a real bargain in some deserted house which most people would think just a hopeless derelict. Like an old gun, we may have to replace lock, stock, and barrel, but if the plan of the original is kept, there will be the charm of an old house with

## Everyday Art

the conveniences of a new one—at least, some of each.

A passion for houses is born in some people, probably the outcome of our nest-building instincts. Houses are human shells, and like our brother crustaceans, we build our history in them. A real house is not made like a real estate enterprise, from the outside in, but by growing from the inside through the actual living and experiences of its occupants. Almost any deserted old house has human interest; but what is more desolate than an abandoned real estate venture?

If we are courageous, it is always possible to get into an old house and make repairs while living in it. We shall be there on the spot to overlook workmen and see the work properly done. The price of materials may rise and fall, and even if there are no strikes there are always parts of a house that are almost impossible to get in reasonable time. We will have a roof over our heads and even if it leak, which is not unlikely, we shall know it is our own roof and our suffering will be minimized. To take over an old house is all right for pioneers, but not for a tenderfoot. Only a pioneer will get real enjoyment out of these experiences.

Many old farmhouses well built and in good condition can be had at moderate prices. Most of them might be called hand-built, for they were built by people for their own use. Their exteriors are usually attractive and their interiors can be made liv-

## Building Over an Old House

able. They were considered comfortable in the old days when human beings were more thought of than luxury. Even if these houses look small from the outside, they have a certain spaciousness within and a certain graciousness in the arrangement of the rooms. They are not cut up into cubic feet according to a cost estimate. They were not cubes entirely surrounded by walls.

It must have been interesting to watch these old houses grow, for they were not built of a sudden, but room by room was added as the family grew. The first home of pioneer folks starting out in life was often two rooms and a half-story attic with a lean-to woodshed. One of the rooms was a kitchen and living room, and one was probably the "best room," with the attic for sleeping quarters. By comparison, a bath with two other similar rooms and one of them a closet called a kitchenette seems rather restricted.

The charm of the outside of old homes comes from the economy of living within actual needs. Unserviceable architecture was not substituted for conveniences. The roofs were high and peaked, to shed the rain and snow and to give ventilation in summer. The overhanging eaves were made wide to keep the drip from weakening the mason work of the foundation.

Usually the quaint upper half-story had two gables, one at the east and one at the west end of the house, and through one or both a chimney grew

## Everyday Art

up to the roof, built on the inside to keep the heat in. The chimneys were for service, not for outside wall ornaments thoughtlessly made to waste wood and coal.

Long, hand-split shingles curved themselves in comfortable rows as the house settled, and leaked only after years of neglect when the homestead was abandoned. The original hand-sawn clap-boards were made semi-fireproof and kept in a good preservation by whitewash.

If the family prospered materially, a cow barn and stable were added near the lean-to, stretching along the door yard, lengthening the silhouette of the house and giving it an air of resting comfortably on the ground instead of standing.

When they could do it, old-time folks had a way of placing their homes under the lea of an eastern hill for shelter from winter blows. They faced the windows toward the south for sunshine and, if there was a porch, built it on the east side of the house. In busy summer days, who had time to sit on porches in the forenoon? In the afternoon the eastern porch was shaded, and with all the household work done one could reposefully knit stockings for winter.

Nowadays we set our houses on the tops of hills to get a view. Then we curtain our windows so securely that we cannot see it unless we go outside. Instead of getting a site near a spring we build windmills and pump up the water, and if the wind does not blow and the mill is out of order, we go



## Building Over an Old House

without water, or we economize it, which is worse.

In remodeling an old house, do not insist on over-modernizing it. It can be spoiled more quickly doing this than in any other way. The really practical way is to conform to the old situation without creating entirely new living conditions. Modes of living which are regarded as ultra-modern in our efficient up-to-date life will some day be obsolete and we may then reverse our decisions about old-fashioned methods. If experience has taught anybody else anything, find out what it taught them and see if we can use it without undergoing the same experience.

The best and most practical way to straighten out an old homestead is to renew or repair the mason work of the foundation and chimneys and replace any unsound timbers, beams, or joists. Dig out the cellar if need be, get rid of the dampness by filling in the floor with cracked stone and laying concrete over it. Two separate small cellars is an excellent idea—one for the pipeless furnace and the other to keep preserves and winter vegetables. One cellar may need an outside stairway, an inside stairway for the coldest weather, and windows. But it is better to keep the two cellars entirely separate. In most old houses the cellar was under the original structure before anything else was added and the walls were probably laid up with field stone and were not thoroughly water-proof. Then it is better to dig outside and reinforce the walls with tar and

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concrete. A damp cellar is always a warm cellar, but nothing in it keeps as well as in a cool cellar well below the frost line.

The water question is always serious, but usually near any old house there is a spring or well and in these days of electricity it is easy to make plumbing and kitchen equipment as modern as possible with an electric engine. If one does not want to do that, one can choose between the double-action force pump with a tank in the house or buried outside below the frost line, or perhaps a water ram to be connected with any amount of plumbing. Hot water can be obtained from a kerosene boiler equipment or perhaps from an electric heater.

There is always a chance of finding a large room in a small house. The living rooms of these houses have such beautiful proportions that they seem large when really they are only of a moderate size, for very often the mason-work walls were anywhere from sixteen inches to eighteen inches in thickness and had the effect of extending the room outward, through the window settings.

The windows themselves are apt to be small, and open at best only half way. These can be replaced by casement windows which in summertime can be opened entirely, bringing in the outside world of green and sunshine. In the living room or kitchen, Dutch doors with the upper half of glass, perhaps made from an old window sash, will give still more sunshine. Windows can be doubled for winter. On

## Building Over an Old House

the north side of the house this is especially necessary. Weather-strip all, without exception. Felt held by metal straps is best. It is not a bad plan to use curtains over doorways and storm doors for those which are most used for outside entrance.

If we want an excuse for curtaining four poster beds, here is one that does not need the sanction of modish decoration, which unnecessarily drapes the four posters of our steam-heated apartments. Hangings to cover the walls of a room, hung about an inch from the sides to give an air space like ancient arras, will save coal enormously. Here, too, is use for batik and stencil and for other modern rejuvenating dye processes. Besides all this, moderate your passion for living all over the house. Cut off a few rooms not absolutely needed in winter and develop a European's aversion to open doors.

In most old-fashioned houses there was an enclosed stairway used as a protection against drafts and to economize fuel. When these houses are remodeled and modern heating appliances put in, the stairway can be opened and railing and newel posts added.

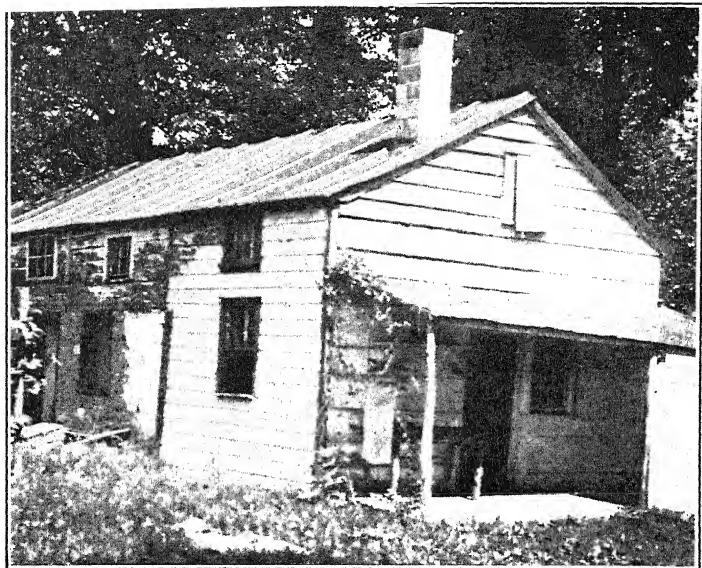
The ceilings sometimes had to be boarded in to save fuel. A low-ceiled room is always warmer, but if underneath the boards the beams are good, they are usually hand-hewn, they make wonderful ceilings. In the original house where upstairs was a half story, the windows of the upper room rested practically on the floor, but dormers can be put in

## Everyday Art

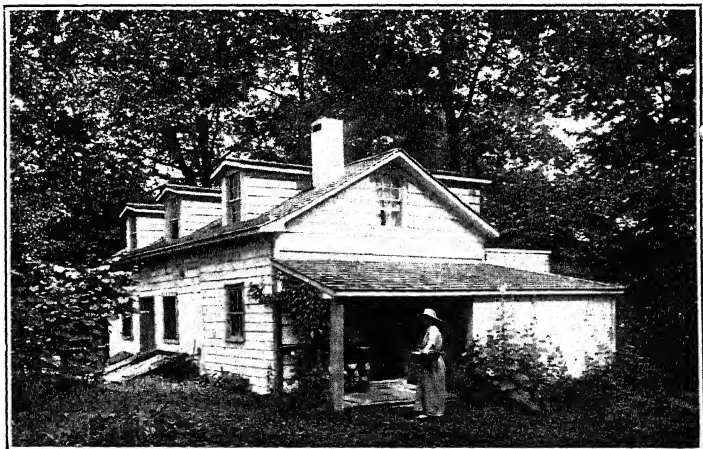
to give the needed light and air, and if carefully planned do not look modern. Sometimes the roof may be raised.

Build in all the furniture possible, for that requires less space than wardrobes and trunks, and conforms more to the character of the house. Under the eaves in the bedrooms, built-in cupboards and drawers are practical, as are tin-edged or hardwood boxes to store summer and winter things as the season changes.

Don't make all improvements, alterations, and repairs in one sitting. Go ahead slowly and open each session with meditation to discover if they are really needed. To do things for picturesque effects has spoiled more beautiful old houses than anything else. I have an old house and I know. It has practically been all made over, but nobody knows that, because I have never done anything which was not for use. I don't think I realized this until a visitor asked me why I did not put the picture of a modern Madonna over a little candle shelf near the china cupboard. No doubt candles and Madonnas had a close connection in her mind, but none in mine, for I then realized that I had done nothing in my house for effect. I had used the candle only for lighting the china closet and had the shelf to stand it on when I had my hands full of dishes. Another frank visitor said she had never seen so many outrageous objects combined into such a successful interior, meaning that the old and the new, the good and the



*Photograph of a house before it was rebuilt.*



*"Afterwards."*



## Building Over an Old House

indifferent were melted into an harmonious whole.

If one has neighbors for workmen (which is very likely, for others are not easy to get in the neighborhood of old farms) one should not get impatient with their old-fogy ways of doing things. If old and new methods are mixed, things are apt to end in hopeless confusion. So to avoid confusion and expense it is wise to start all work on contract and then let them poke along as the spirit moves them.

On the outside there can be a serviceable little kitchen porch with an extra hand pump for summer use, and space to store wood in winter. And there can be a red brick walk with a herring-bone pattern. Or some humbler field stones can be made into a stepping path set in the turf. If animals are not kept, the old barn will be needed for tools and for the flivver. Why not build a visitors' room there? It is as delightful as it is rare to visit a house where one does not have to conform to the habits and vagaries of the family. It may be practical to put in a mezzanine half-story, perhaps a studio window in the roof at the north, so that when there are no visitors it can be used for a workshop or studio.

When we step out to the door yard and garden, we see the house is painted white, as all old houses should be, so bright colored hollyhocks close up will look well against the walls.

Water paint and whitewash are good wood preservatives and a protection against insects and fires.

## Everyday Art

A clear place around a home is necessary as a setting. A small lawn with a few flower beds and a clump of shrubs is an addition. But beware of lawns. Decide first how much is needed to set off the house and sign an affidavit not to extend it. There is no greater temptation than to make the lawn just a little larger. But of the mowing of lawns there is no end; and an uncut lawn is less effective than the group of burdocks which will soon replace it if one has laid out more lawn than one can mow.

If it has a chance, a garden grows about a house just as a house grows about folks. By adding a few plants each year, one gets the better results of deliberate choice. If one has good neighbors, gifts of roots and slips are always coming along and can soon be passed on as presents. Who has not noticed in the country that flowers have a sectional character, the result of neighborly exchange?

It is wise to have as many perennial shrubs and hardy flowers as we can. They come up every year, all the better for good care, but just the same, they come. Some of my most charming flowers have come from old gardens where I dug up a neglected plant or shoot. I have some wonderful yellow irises from the garden of a friend who did not even know their color, as they had never blossomed. They proved to be a wonderful lemon yellow and now my neighbors have exchanged with me for other colors. They come up, these perennials, year after year, in the same place, and even though you get familiar



## Building Over an Old House

enough with them to call them by their first names, their beauty is never quite familiar and always a surprise.

From a human standpoint it is not important to live in any special place or in any special way. But it is important that the way and the place should be a part of one's living. The homes of long ago developed their charm because they were a part of the people and necessary in their living conditions. Where we get harmony we get beauty whether in living with things or with people, and unless we live this way, better live without them. Shall we greet old Sis Moon as she comes over the hill as a friend, or is she merely a part of the stage set?

## CHAPTER XVI

### COLOR OUTDOORS AND IN



GREAT deal of pretty good architecture and of very good paint is spoiled by painting the outside of houses with a wrong combination of colors. Sometimes three or even four colors are used on the same house and it ends by looking more like a map than like a home. But some houses have architecture which has so little to do with the construction of the house that no amount of attention to the color scheme will produce external simplicity. A house, probably built to look "picturesque," is often one to which each new owner has added a new "idea." These houses have the most unexpected combinations of details and structural defects.

One favored manner of breaking up such architectural consistency as a house may naturally have, is to paint each story a different color. It does not seem possible that anyone can have so much misguided imagination, but it is done with the best intention of getting a rich appearance. Very often the first story is a light color and the next story very much darker, which makes the whole house look top-

## Color Outdoors and In

heavy, especially if it has been burdened with a number of offsets and bow windows. Perhaps the roof has also been stained a third color to add to the confusion.

Then there is the other extreme in house painting, which results in general monotony—a house and everything on it painted the same color. There is a house in my neighborhood which was painted all white—doors, windows, side walls, and trim. The result was a white blot on the landscape. Only once did I see it in a becoming condition. That was in a snow-storm when everything else had become white and gray and the house fitted into the scheme.

Perhaps the most important thing in decoration, as well as in architecture, is to make our houses accord with their surroundings. Certain characteristic surroundings always give suggestions for the colors of our homes. A house set in a grove of trees, if painted or stained a warm, purplish brown and trimmed with leaf green, the roof stained a purplish gray, would then harmonize with its surroundings. This is the artistic principle of camouflage used to dissemble objects in war strategy, making them indistinct by painting them the same color as their backgrounds. Another example is the painting of duck boats used in hunting. The opposite effect is easy. All we have to do is to paint our house any contrasting color and it will stand out on the landscape conspicuously.

If a house needs repainting, go over it carefully

## Everyday Art

first and see if there is not some scrollwork and jig-saw ornamentation that can be removed without hurting the stability of the structure. Sometimes these ornamentations have been so incorporated in the building that it is not possible to remove them. Perhaps they have been painted a different color from the house and the same color as the trim. If they cannot be removed, paint them the same color as the house and they will sink into it and become a background for other detail.

When a house is planned by a careful architect, the external decoration rather does itself. There are not many features to consider. It is where too elaborate detail takes the place of construction that we have to consider means which will make it less prominent. An example of playing safe in house painting is to paint the whole house one color, the trim another, leaving the roof as much as possible the natural color of the material used. The roof if shingled will in time take on the usual soft gray. Some of the detail can have more color variety. The doors may be either darker or more brilliant and the blinds can introduce another tone. Blinds, by the way, do not always have to be painted the conventional green in common use, though this has one virtue: when the paint is not of good quality the yellow fades out, leaving only the blue which is a more permanent color and often makes very interesting though unintentional combinations.

There are color schemes which might be called

## Color Outdoors and In

conventional, though in reality they are developed through their serviceable features. They seem conventional only because we see them so often. For example, the little white houses with the gray roofs and greenish-blue blinds one sees throughout New England. They look very well dotted about the landscape, because their architecture harmonizes with their surroundings.

A natural color scheme, harmonizing with gray shingles, is to paint the body of the house a very deep cream, the trim yellow, the blinds and doors a deep orange. The deep yellow is a color called, in painters' language, yellow chrome. It is an expensive pigment, but it lasts and cannot be got by mixing other colors together. It is not usual to paint blinds orange yellow, but as features of a color arrangement there is no reason why they should not be painted any color which falls in with the rest of the scheme. They are not part of the actual structure of a house; therefore, they can be treated ornamentally.

Very often the color of the roof, determined by the material used on it, will give the key-note to the color relation for the outside wall surfaces and details of the house. Red tiles have distinguished color of their own and it would seem worth while to make them the principal note of a color scheme and make the other colors agree with them. If the house happens to be stucco, a good arrangement with red tiles is to tint the stucco a warm, tannish

## Everyday Art

yellow two or three tones lighter than the roof color. It must be really light enough to contrast in degree of tone as well as in color. The wooden trim can be stained a dark oak. This should be the darkest tone value of the combination. Slate has many beautiful colors not often used. Even the gray slate is beautiful, but some of the more rare varieties run into purplish grays mottled with green. Using these as a key-note, very unusual color combinations can result.

There are many roofing materials manufactured in paper or asbestos to imitate natural products. Most of these seem like makeshifts, but as they are much used for moderate priced houses they have to be considered in external decoration. After all it is better to have a paper roof that we own than not to have a roof at all. It would be nice if one could always buy the best, but though most things are compromises, with imagination they can be made to fit in. The most objectionable kind of roofing is where the manufacturer's imagination has led him to mix imitation roof tiles in various colors. They come by the yard or by the section and are easy to put on, but the one-tone roofing material is no more expensive and does not seem so much of a makeshift. This may seem a prejudice, but it is wise to give and keep an ideal of permanency in our homes and permanent building materials will add to this feeling. Everybody should understand that the all-important thing is to have a home, and if we cannot

## Color Outdoors and In

have an expensive one, we must have the best we can get at the time.

For interior use in the average-sized room a medium tone of any color is preferable. The ceiling and the floor should be in contrasting tone values, the floors usually darker, and the ceiling lighter. This is not an arbitrary rule, for arbitrary rules cannot be made in regard to rooms any more than they can be made for the decoration of individuals. Well-lit interiors, for instance, seem generally desirable, but there may be exceptions. Sometimes a room can be made very interesting by using very dark walls. The wood-paneled rooms of the Tudor and Elizabethan periods have the characteristic beauty of their dark side walls and ceilings. Indeed, the floors also, for they were usually of dark oak. These rooms were wonderful at night, or must have been wonderful, with the deep shadowy tones of candle light on the side walls and ceiling also of paneled oak.

Another decorative plan is to get color in a room by reflected light—that is, when the color that shows is not the actual color but is made by reflecting light on various surfaces. Gold, for this reason, makes a beautiful color effect, because it shows up a variety of tones. Silver can be used in the same way, though silver backgrounds are so high keyed that they are not so beautiful as the lower key obtained by using gold. With silver and gold as a foundation, light is not only reflected, but changes of light constantly

## Everyday Art

influence the surface of gold or silver in the room and give it the charm of never having quite the same appearance—of being a familiar place with a new aspect. It is the same kind of charm one sees out of doors, where natural color changes in atmosphere and light satisfies the eye and interests the mind through variety of incident.

By a careful analysis of the room we are decorating, changing effects of color treatment can be gotten. Suppose the effect in a room is to be rose color. Any room which is lit from windows gets a variety of color tones on the walls through the way the light is distributed. There are hardly any rooms where the natural or artificial light is evenly distributed. Such rooms would be impossible to decorate and more impossible to live in after it was decorated. It would become a kind of medieval torture room from its absolute monotony.

Very often a room is lit from the window spaces on one side only and the walls that have the windows are darker in the daytime than the walls on the opposite side—that is, they are more evenly dark. On the wall where the light strikes, the higher lights and deeper shadows contrast more strongly. Taking the pink room as an example, the shadows of the window side of the room would have a tendency to a yellowish pink, and where the light strikes the walls it would tone more into a bluish pink.

To intensify this effect of light, the wall, where the windows are, can actually be painted a yellower



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pink, and the opposite wall where the light falls can be toned into a purpler pink. This is exactly what is done in theatrical scene painting and by theatrical lighting. But it can be carefully done in houses without becoming theatrical and it gives great charm and variety to the color. It is not difficult to do. One has only to remember to intensify the effects suggested by the actual color modified by light. Even at night these effects are interesting, though it may seem rather unusual to paint the walls of the same room different colors. It is not really painting them a different color, but different varieties of the same color.

This kind of wall painting gives a suggestion of distance. By the same means a small room may be made to look larger if the walls where the light falls are painted the bluish, or cool tone, of the color scheme. There are certain colors which we associate in our minds with distance and atmosphere and these are the ones that we actually have to use in decoration to get distance. If objects of intensely contrasting colors are silhouetted against these atmospheric tones, the effect of distance will be still more intensified.

Another way of reflecting color is to paint the floor a tone which will radiate light on the rest of the room. A yellow, like a medium chrome, is a good color to use. This color will cast a yellow glow on both the side walls and the ceilings and can be emphasized by using curtains of transparent scrim

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in a lighter yellow. The light coming through these curtains makes the color in the whole room more intense. Yellow in itself has a luminous quality, but other colors like atmospheric blues and grays, cannot be used for this purpose as they do not successfully reflect light. Gold can be used on floors for reflecting light and color, but it must be put on with great care, for otherwise it does not last.

A very small room can be made to look less crowded with its furniture by subordinating the details of the color scheme, for instance, by painting some of the furniture the same color as the floor. If it is painted actually like the floor, it will naturally hold itself in with the floor color and will not show as separate features. If it is not necessary to paint it the same floor color, it may be painted in a lighter or darker tone. In a small room with a dark red floor the trim could be painted a contrasting color, for instance a medium golden brown. But the furniture, if painted in the same color as the floor, would give the whole room a more spacious appearance. An added color in a small room with a red floor would add only distracting detail.

There are some combinations which have become so familiar and conventional that one accepts them without taking much thought. The usual blue-and-white room is an example. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred the furniture in this room can all be bought either in blue or in white, so it seems easy to set up a color harmony with it. But it is not so

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easy as it seems. We have a room with white walls and blue furnishings. The woodwork usually would be painted white. There would be a blue carpet, or at least blue rugs on the floor. In case rugs are used, the floor would show and a contrasting color note would be unconsciously introduced which would set off the blue and white of the room. The furniture would be covered with blue-and-white chintz, and we would have a continued effect of white on blue or blue on white, throughout the whole room. Instead of achieving harmony, we have achieved monotony. If we analyze the color scheme, we find that to emphasize and set off the blue and white we need another color. What we need is something that contrasts with blue and white, or, as an artist would say, which would supply the complementary color for blue or white. Blue and white really count as the same color, because white is nearly a tone of light blue. The color best to emphasize the blue and white is bright greenish yellow. The brown floor showing through the rugs has supplied some of it, but not enough to create a balance, so we must put it in the furnishings of the room. Bright yellow silk window curtains would add enough contrast. By analyzing the room we can always find this note of balance. It might be called a note of distinction, for it takes away the commonplace monotony of conventional color.

Most colors in houses are not bad in themselves. They are unrelated and unarranged. Colors are

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like words in a sentence. Once in a while you will find a color that is like a misspelled word which cannot be used until the spelling is corrected. But nearly always groups of color are like words which do not make sense, because they have not been properly arranged and so are incoherent.

Texture is very closely allied to color, so we have also to consider the texture of our floors, side walls, and ceilings. Certain colors in certain textures have no luminosity or carrying power, but the proper texture will bring it out. Then there are certain other colors which can be subdued by using textures that will suppress their vibrant quality. We could use a more brilliant color on a side wall in a dull finish than in glazed paint. Dull-finish paint on side walls is more generally successful, because it does not reflect the light and consequently does not compete with the texture of the furnishings or gowns in the room. For most ceilings a dull surface is more satisfactory, which is probably the reason we use kalsomine on ceilings. It makes a room look higher than a shiny surface which reflects light.

In period rooms where the paneling is the main feature, brilliant textures can be used in the panels because we wish to emphasize them and not to repress them. For that reason, upholstery materials like satins and taffetas are sometimes successful. But even in textures the scale of the texture must be more or less subdued. Most tapestries are woven so that the thread lies flat on the surface. This


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corresponds to the character of a wall surface. One could not imagine a woolly texture that would be successful on a wall. On floors we may use heavy woolen rugs with detail in their texture and find them harmonious.

A few pots of paint from the five- and ten-cent store will not make an artistic atmosphere, or even a color scheme, unless you are an artist. Your room might do for a temporary tea room, but it will not be good enough to last for a home. The bizarre is not always attractive. It is usually only a symptom of breaking from conventions, and in that it has real value. It costs very little more to paint a room beautifully than it does to paint it inharmoniously. We will not have to pay the house painter any more, but it will cost us more of our time and attention unless we pay some one to get harmony for us. It is really worth while to put ourselves into it and get what we want either one way or the other. For if we really get a beautiful color scheme in our rooms, we will want to keep it. If we feel the need of change, we can move the furniture around without disturbing it. Need of change is usually dissatisfaction with the things around us, which makes us move on, thinking that our surroundings are wrong. What we want is not to change our surroundings but to change our circumstances, so that we can get beauty and keep it, for beauty is really an economy in the end.

## CHAPTER XVII

### ART IN YARDS AND GARDENS

HERE is something in the mere ownership of a garden which goes to the heads of most amateur gardeners, and it is difficult to convince them that their gardens are not the tip-top of garden making. Their final argument will always be, "Well, it's my garden and I like it that way," or, "I like my garden to look natural. I don't like it all fixed up."

And it is true that there are facts on their side, for if anyone buys a few packages of mixed flower seeds and sows them broadcast, some charming combinations seem to refute the theory that garden making is an art like any other, and that when one gets away from a natural wilderness some degree of art must be applied to create beauty of arrangement in form and color. Flowers are so beautiful, each in its own way, that we are apt to think only of each as a separate beauty, not as part of a scheme where its form and color must harmonize with other flowers.

A planned garden will not look unnatural. It will not, of course, look like a wild garden, but we must

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remember that we are no longer in a wild state. We live in houses which are not the natural abode of the wild man, but which must conform to certain principles of structure, else they will not stand up. As soon as we begin to use Nature to interpret our ideas, we interfere with its forms. Whether we are conscious of it or not, we are attempting to put something of ourselves, of our tastes and desires, into our work, be it a flower garden or a house. So almost any house needs a bit of lawn, or a small group of flower beds around to complete its setting.

The Japanese, and the Chinese from whom they inherited their art, have the most artistic gardens in the world. There everything is considered as part of a design, and not only are the flowers trained to take on certain directions of line and form of mass, but also the trees and shrubs are trimmed, and bent and grouped so that the entire landscape is a work of art. Nothing is left to chance; everything is an arrangement of form and line.

This may seem too extreme for us Western individualists. But, certainly, we may learn from these Eastern gardeners that thought and care in the planting and selection of the varieties of shrubs and flowers will not necessarily result in a stiff and unnatural-looking garden, but will give effects which because they are founded on principles of art will not seem self-conscious or artificial. These principles are the same in the composition of a picture, a hat, a frock, or a house.

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*In regard to art, the Japanese are the most sophisticated nation in the world. They do not believe in taking chances even in their gardens. They trim and train their trees to grow in decorative lines.*



## Art in Yards and Gardens

There is a kind of plan which really is stiff—circles, stars, and diamonds carried out in smallish cacti and colored leaf plants. But as these occur mostly in front of railway stations and cemeteries, we need not worry about their invasion on our private estates. That is not art; it is geometry, and is so difficult that it ought to be impossible.

If you get a good plan for planting your garden, you will still have plenty of fun keeping it in order, and even in replanting and transplanting. For seeds and plants do not always grow up like their parents or stay true to type, and sometimes the florists make amusing mistakes in labels, as when a red J. P. Morgan rose, named after a bold financier, comes up pure white, and the Helen Gould, named after a quiet philanthropist, comes up vivid red.

It is quite worth while to make a plan for a garden, but not so hard and fast that it cannot always be altered later if our ideas change. A sensible way to begin is to arrange groups of two or three harmonious colors against groups of shrubs where the masses of greens act as backgrounds for the flowers, bringing out decorative effects in color, line, and mass. It is an amusing and interesting game.

I once saw a most attractive and unexpected color arrangement about quite an ordinary frame house painted rather an uninspiring brown. It was not a particularly bad color, but it was commonplace, or would have been had not the house been surrounded with copper birches and some copper barberry

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bushes and pink Japanese flowering quince. The effect of the whole group was distinguished and unusual, and though I was flying by in the railway train I was tempted to stick my head out of the window and shout, "Sir, or Madam, did you mean it that way, or did the unseen powers take care of you? In either case my profound respects."

There are simple means of getting some color effects which will not draw too much on our time and attention. A friend has a garden where no special effort has been made to plant for mass and line arrangements, but where the color groups are charming. The garden has only purple and yellow flowers in every degree of tone from light yellow to dark yellow, green yellows, and reddish yellows; from light purple to deep, pinkish purples and bluish purples. Of course, the scheme was immensely helped out by the great variety in the shades of green foliage. When I asked the owner how she did it, she said it was very easy because she bought only seeds of plants which have either purple or yellow blossoms. The earth in that particular place contributed a very wonderful color note as a background, for it was a deep, warm, purplish brown, the color of well-fertilized and cultivated earth. The color of the soil is indeed one of the principal factors in producing a pleasing effect in a garden. Some clayish looking soils are very difficult to handle. Dark, rich loams always help the color scheme.

It does not take much thought or work to get a

## Art in Yards and Gardens

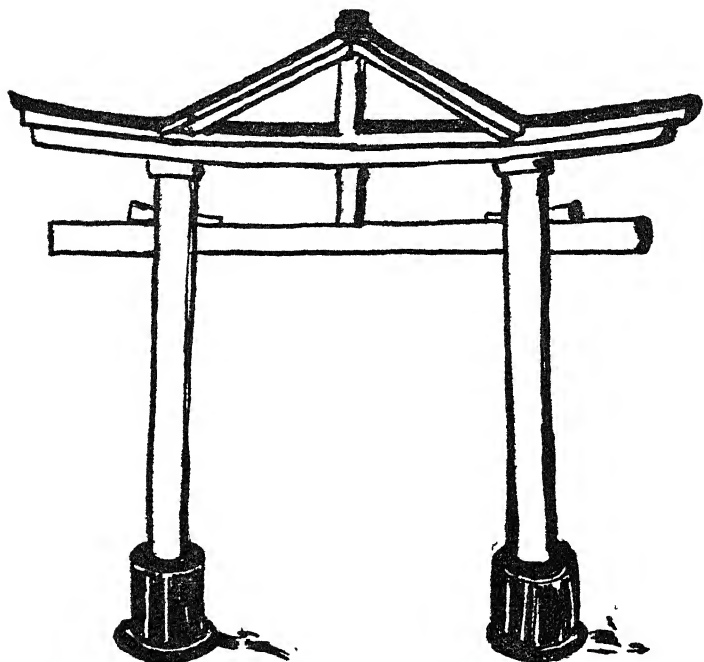
little sense of landscape design. We need not go so far toward arrangement as the Japanese who make it a fine art, just as they do of cut flower arrangements in their houses. But, certainly, a little care in planting and replanting will add much to the natural beauty of flower and flowering shrubs. Formal arrangements are difficult to keep in order, and the best kind of planting for daily use is that which gives the effect of general harmony, and yet shows off the individual character of each flower and plant—a plan which will not hide the beauty of any one plant, but will add charm to each by harmonizing their contrasting forms and colors.

The shades of greens in garden foliage themselves supply unending variety. No two plants have leaves of exactly the same green. Some are dark or light in tone value, and there are light yellow greens down the gamut to dark blue greens, like the leaves of the indigo plant from which indigo dye is made. But whatever color or tone of green the leaves of a plant may be, they harmonize with the color of its blossoms.

Each plant has some distinctive feature which if used characteristically is a valuable part of a design. Some plants and shrubs suggest one type of line, some another, and the mass of the silhouette of each group is an asset if well placed in relation to the whole. Each of them seems to have a line rhythm special to itself. The characteristic features of each plant can be best understood by noticing the

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way its main stems grow, the direction, and the interval of the branches, the arrangement of the masses, and the scale or size of the blossoms. These



*The torii is a gateway used in Japan to frame a distant view or a nearby arrangement of plants and flowers in a landscape.*

are all elements of design and are for us to perceive and use. The same is true of color though rules for color combinations cannot be given for any garden. Only principles of art can be applied.

When our New York Public Library at Fifth

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Avenue and Forty-second Street was completed, there was an instance of shrub planting without design at the base of the retaining walls of the terraces where box was planted in a row close up to the walls. The stocky little box trees silhouetted against the white marble like so many hard, dark green billiard balls. A few feet nearer the sidewalk and just inside the marble coping were rows of barberry bushes, which had no effect at all, because the delicate tracery of their long stems made an indefinite outline which was lost in the grass. The position of these two shrubs should have been reversed. Had the barberry bushes been planted at the base of the retaining walls, their outline against the white marble would have been definite. And were the box trees behind the coping, their dark green masses would have been a definite silhouette against the light green of the grass behind. Then, as they were so closely planted, they would have formed a supplementary border to the coping and emphasized an architectural intention. Happily, someone found out that the planting was wrong and next year it was changed.

It takes an artist to make a really beautiful garden. Anyone who has the money can buy artist colors at the shop, or seeds at the seed store, but only an artist can use seeds or color tubes harmoniously. Color grouping means using colors in certain proportions, proportion of intensity, and quality of color. If we choose a larkspur plant for a

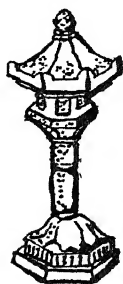
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certain position in our garden, we must choose it of that shade of blue needed in our design. The shade of blue needed depends on the other colors used with it. Everything counts in making a garden; even all the near-by shrubs and trees come in as a background.

Though it takes an artist to make a beautiful garden, the comforting fact remains that more of us are artists than we realize, and that most of us have more good taste than we use because we are too timid to use it. We hear that artists are born, not made, and we rest on that assumption, because we are not capable of thinking or are too lazy to think farther. Artists are born only as material for the making, and although no two human beings are gifted alike, either in degree or in kind, each may develop through courage, character, perseverance, experience, consecration, and many other things. First of all, they develop through courage born of the desire and love to do the chosen thing. This in some degree includes us all, and so there is no excuse for not having beauty about us, including a beautiful garden if you want one; for charming tousel of gardens, quite in keeping with a deserted farm, can be accomplished without method and can be seen almost anywhere. If we are happy that way it is all right, but it is not art.

What is true of the garden about a house is true of the yard behind it. It is only unreasoning prejudice which keeps the average backyard the thing it

## Art in Yards and Gardens



*A bridge and some stone lanterns used as garden ornaments.*

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looks like—a dump for discarded household goods or worse. We may not all be socially enlightened enough to co-operate and join our city backyards together, to bank them, as it were, but we are rapidly going in that direction. We will then have more civic beauty, but less proprietorship. But even if we are not ready to co-operate, those of us who like pleasing views about us can make individual attempts to beautify our backyards in the cities and suburban towns.

In some cities a few backyards have been turned into small gardens, laid out by landscape architects or decorators in connection with some of the largest apartment houses, or where groups of private houses have been rebuilt and turned into apartments. (Of course, there are many beautiful private gardens even in the most crowded cities, but that means that the owners can afford any kind of luxury—even that of not collecting rents.) The backyards in connection with remodeled houses are laid out on a miniature scale if they adjoin a single house, sometimes with brick walls and copings around small flower beds, a few stone or artificial stone benches, lattice work against the high board fences. Or, if against brick walls, perhaps a small fountain or birds' drinking basin built in. All these features may be done by ourselves even to laying a brick wall, if we have courage.

Many house owners have made some effort to beautify or clean up their backyards, but have be-



## Art in Yards and Gardens

come discouraged, either because the soil is so poor or because neighbors do not seem to have the same decorative ideals. But the soil can be sweetened and the neighbors educated. It is all pioneer work, but that is healthful. Send a sample of the garden soil to the nearest agricultural college and they can tell what the soil needs. Perhaps only grass will grow there, but if it will, perhaps its engaging greenness may discourage throwers of waste paper and rags or garbage. Beauty, even of a humble kind, will eventually discourage waste and untidiness. There is nothing more educating than a love of beauty once we get it in our blood. It takes the fanaticism of an idol breaker to destroy it. We will find our neighbors watching our æsthetic efforts and presently making attempts of their own. Their education will come as a by-product of our efforts. Then we shall feel that the co-operative gardens of our future cities have begun to appear as a speck on the horizon.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### JAPANESE IDEAS ON FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS



SINCE when I was advocating the flower arrangements of the Japanese, a listener asked, "They are very beautiful, and works of art, but would not the Japanese style be lost on the backgrounds of our modern homes?" It is true that taste and sense of arrangement are characteristic of the Japanese people, and also that we have many more things in our houses than they, so that it is possible these carefully studied groups of flowers would conflict with our surroundings. We use a profusion of flowers in one vase, which coincides with the many kinds of ornaments and things with which we fill our homes. A single flower stem in a beautiful vase trained as a composition of decorative line would be lost if placed on a confused background. In Japan the interior walls of the houses are at most ornamented with a makemono or a kakemono, and the arrangement of the panels of a room are in themselves a careful study in decorative composition.

The simplicity of Japanese flower groups may

## Japanese Ideas on Flowers

seem exaggerated to us, and perhaps not altogether suited to our Western surroundings. But even if their work is nothing more now than an influence on the arrangements of our bouquets, it will later be extended to restrain the profusion of furniture we crowd into our homes.

The Japanese believe that artistic principles should control all expression; that all human effort must result in art and not in a collection of meaningless forms. When we deal with Nature, there is no half-way stopping place. Either we leave her unconquered and undeveloped, or we perceive her meaning and make our feelings clear about it through some definite work. Such an interpretation is limited by what can be done in any given medium; consequently, it must be governed by definite artistic principles. When I have a vision of a wooden chair, the more definite my vision is when I make my chair of bamboo, or other material, the better the chair that will be produced.

If we do not care to go as far as the Japanese in simplicity, there are still certain things which we can do with a little understanding of their sense of arrangement. For instance, the careful choice of the receptacle, or vase, for each kind of flowers, selecting the type which corresponds to the structure of the plant we wish to arrange in it. For Japanese groupings the flowers are selected specially with a view to striking an harmonious arrangement and are not crowded together in a vase without a definite

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plan. Our usual method seems to be to get just as many flowers as we can in one vase, to stuff a vase so full that the flowers do not even get enough water. This is a great waste, and the Japanese way, besides being more artistic, is much more economical. We can take a long-stemmed iris and arrange it in a vase with a long neck and a bulb-like base which corresponds in form to its growth. These bulb-like vases are particularly successful for flower groupings, because they have room enough at the bottom for an ample supply of water and therefore keep flowers much fresher than the shallow vases.

There is also space for pebbles in them.

All flowers which belong to the lily family and those which have the lily characteristics, look well when arranged in this kind of a vase. The Japanese artists do not arrange them in this way, but we could not make their arrangements unless we studied their art. They would take an iris, or perhaps the branch of a pine tree, and treat it as a symbol and also as an artistic line arrangement. They would use the stem of the lily or the pine to express certain meanings in line which have nothing whatever to do with the way these plants grow. Certain artists in Japan make their living as teachers of flower arrangement. Certainly, no one could earn a living here that way—more's the pity—but it does not cost very much to live in those Far Eastern countries.

It is easier to succeed with color combinations in

## Japanese Ideas on Flowers



*Jonquil*



*Lotus*

*The Japanese ignore growth tendencies in flowers and plants and substitute for it a decorative symbolism.*



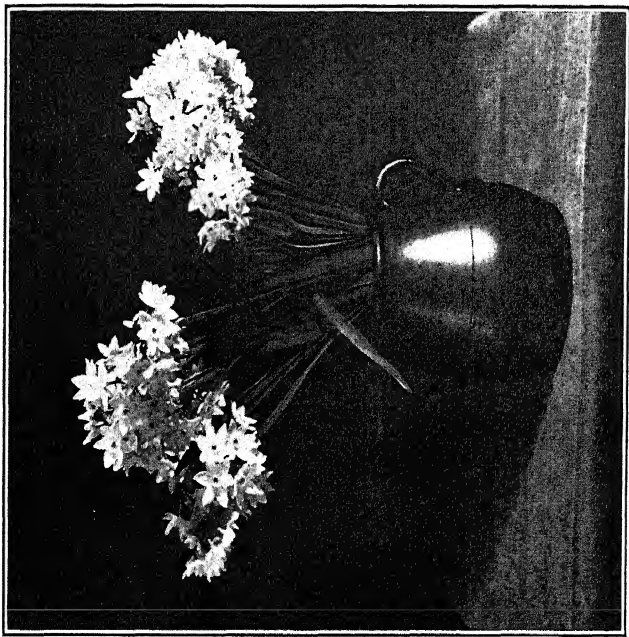
*This is a pine branch trained into a decorative interpretation of Japan's famous mountain volcano Fugyi San.*

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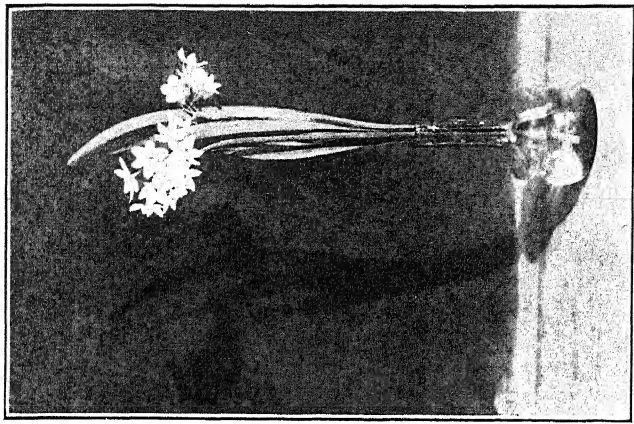
flower arrangements, because the color of the flowers themselves help us out. It requires much patience to spend days, or even weeks, training a single branch to conform to a prescribed type of composition, to make it express wildness or domestic quiet, turmoil or peace. But generally speaking, more artistic results can be had with less thought and more effect by making our flower groups harmonize with the vase used to hold them.

An earthenware jug may be filled with a group of field flowers, a brown jug with black-eyed Susans, and a piece of dark blue larkspur added to set off the browns and yellows. Or a transparent vase of iridescent glass with a group of long-stemmed columbines in their high-keyed tones of pink, lemon yellow, blue, violet, and some white; a green pottery jug with some hardy pink flower, sweet williams, or perhaps some phlox, though phlox is one of the most difficult flowers to arrange. Like some other flowers, it really looks better growing in a garden than it ever does when picked, because in a garden it shows up as large masses of color, and one does not see the detail of the individual blossom which singly is not so interesting as the entire mass. That is because its color is more beautiful than its form of growth.

White, opaque glass, or white earthenware, with a wide-flaring rim, small waist, and a broad, flaring base, can be used for lilies of the valley, placing an arrangement of leaves to lie against the edge of the



*Jonquils "fixed" in an earthenware jug, a receptacle wholly unsuited to the manner of their growth.*



*An arrangement of jonquils suggesting art and nature, where east and west meet.*





## Japanese Ideas on Flowers

rim. White pottery receptacles are especially charming, because they do not conflict with the color of the flower blossoms. White, black, or dark or medium green, are always easily arranged with flower groups. All these suggestions are given merely to stimulate criticism. They may make us think of something more original and attractive and help us to study intelligently the flower schemes in some of our florists' windows.

Some flowers do not seem to lend themselves easily to definite compositions, but have other charms of sentiment or perfume. Among these are heliotrope, sweet-scented geranium, lemon verbena, mignonette, forget-me-not, and others of the old-fashioned variety. These should generally be grouped by themselves because of a certain pleasure they give us through association.

There are some things which seem out of taste, because they are against the sentiment of the flowers and plants, like filling an empty fireplace with branches of dogwood and making their beautiful blossoms turn all full-faced to you. This is bad taste, because it is neither the intention of Nature, nor accidental art, and not in accordance with their growth or corresponding to the symmetry of line they suggest. Each plant growth has a character which, if emphasized, gives us the sentiment and feeling of that kind of plant, whether used naturally or ornamentally. If we must fill up our empty fireplaces in the summer, I would suggest a fire board

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painted with a decorative flower composition, coat of arms, or even a conventional landscape.

Our table decorations correspond to the character of our houses and are so complicated in style that here, also, simplicity seems the first thing to suggest. A center decoration for the table might be made with such distinction as to concentrate everybody's interest and attention on one important group, instead of diffusing it with fussy little bunches of flowers and millinery ribbons spread all round. A broad-rimmed plate of either dark green or dark blue glass, or even amber, might be filled with something besides the obvious collection of fruit which one always sees at a dinner table and which makes one wonder how one can eat the fruit without spoiling the effect. Therefore, one might use some unedible growth, perhaps the many colored gourds, or even some uncooked garden products. These are as beautiful as fruit if tastefully arranged, and only tempt us to look at them. I used once a goldfish globe of clear glass filled with some dissolved orange dye, in which I arranged some unripe wild grapes on the vine. It made an unusual composition. The daughter of William Morris had on her dinner table the same kind of globe filled with colored pebbles in water, the water bringing out the beautiful colors of the stones. Do not be afraid to use anything that pleases you. If you can make an artistic composition of it, you will be successful and no one will criticize its material.

## Japanese Ideas on Flowers

Beside table decorations, there are other places in which we can use ornamental plants. It is difficult to get plants which are hardy enough to stand the hardships of either indoor or outdoor window boxes. Indoors they are apt to dry up with our overheated houses, and outdoors the earth in the boxes is so shallow that even evergreens and ivies will freeze. But as plants in window boxes are hardly ever seen as more than a silhouette against the light, artificial plants serve us as well and have the great advantage of being fairly permanent. Little wooden trees can be cut in characteristic shape from thin pine board and painted. They may imitate a row of tidy evergreens, because it is not difficult to make a characteristic silhouette of the simple and well-known form of an evergreen. They might even be as ingenuous as the Noah's Ark variety.

To these groups of evergreens one can add real twigs of holly or winter berries which will camouflage any defects in the decorative trees. Even some kinds of commercially made branches could be used. There has been a great deal of progress in the artificial flowers and plants for brightening rooms, and they are no longer classed as artificial, but decorative. Many of these are natural seed pods and tree branches, like oak, maple, elm, and birch, treated by special processes. They are dipped in chemicals and dyes which preserve them and substantially keep their color. Care in selection will add some charm-

## Everyday Art

ing varieties to our rooms. Some, of course, are so obviously imitational and uncharacterized that they are impossible.

Other pleasing plants can be easily made at home by coating twigs and branches with a mixture of flour paste and starch, and glue colored with ink or commercial dyes. The natural branch should be dipped into the mixture of colored paste and hung in a warm place until it is perfectly hard. These can be used on the table in place of natural plants and flowers.

There are also some wild and garden plants which can be dried and made to look well in a room. The Chinese lantern plant with its brilliant orange seed pod, just the shape of a Chinese lantern, makes a very charming and attractive group. There are also straw flowers, or, as we used to call them, bachelor buttons, and sea lavender. Many combinations can be made with these and colored twigs. They have the advantage of fitting into the color scheme of any room, because they can be chosen to harmonize with its furnishings. Further, they will help us to realize what we can do when we begin to see Nature in accordance with art.

## CHAPTER XIX

### ART IN HANDWRITING AND IN SPEECH



HERE are three things which are most easily improved by a little attention; the big muscle of the arm, the memory, and the handwriting. As our handwriting, like everything else, should belong to ourselves, we would do well to practice it until it becomes a harmonious part of our other arts.

Handwriting seems to go to two extremes; either it is very legible and extremely uninteresting, or else it is extremely illegible and looks so interesting that one takes more time to decipher it than any letter is worth. I speak feelingly, for I once had that kind of handwriting. For years I thought that I wrote a very distinguished hand—only people had not yet been taught to read it. Then I began to apply principles of art to it and now people can read what I write. That is part of the use of writing.

The modern method of teaching writing is an application of Delsarte's principles, which teach that movement beginning at the extremities is cramped and unnatural and relatively slow, but that movement originating from the whole body through the

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shoulder is easy and graceful. To be an art, the impulse for the form of writing, like that of an emotion, must come from within. It will require only a little attention to this fact to gain freedom, clearness, and speed.

To copy some particular style of handwriting slavishly, or to copy someone else's which one admires, is to substitute what little there may remain of someone else's ideas for one's own. That is why we are probably bored by our enforced attempts at imitation.

The improved system, then, is to write with the same movement you would naturally strike with, a good swing from the shoulder. To do this, it is only necessary to take a position such that freedom of the whole arm becomes easy; to use the forearm as a pivot which steadies and supports the hand. The same methods can be used in free-hand drawing.

It is not necessary to believe that one can change one's handwriting by these means, but it is necessary to try, and the results will bring forth faith. These principles may be all wrong, but just try them for a few minutes every day for a week, and you will find that a poor hand is made good, and a good hand is made easy and beautiful.

The pleasure in handwriting depends more than anything else upon the spacing between the letters of each word, and the same is true of any kind of lettering or printing, whether it be done by hand or by machine. Good lettering must always, first and

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foremost, be distinct, and it can be distinct only when the letters of each word are so composed as not to interfere with each other. Each goes to the making of the word of which it is a part, and if they are crowded, or unevenly spaced, some will be indistinct and lose in importance. There is no reason in writing or in lettering why one letter of a word should be made more important than another. The only letter of a word which is sometimes emphasized is when a word is capitalized. Sometimes words are emphasized by capitals or italics, but for other than special purposes or advertising, this emphasis is a bad practice. A sentence is the expression of an idea, and if the idea is well expressed all the words are important, one just as much as the other, and the whole of the words in the sentence should be arranged accordingly.

No one wants to stutter or to speak clumsily. Almost every one nowadays takes pains to speak clearly and distinctly, knowing that this perhaps more than anything else is a mark of education. Then why should one mutter or cackle in handwriting? Unless a truly beautiful hand, like a naturally well modulated and well placed voice, is a natural gift, it must be studied as an art and governed by the principles of art. One does not want to have an ugly mouth, or to use ugly words, and no one likes an ugly hand. Then why an ugly handwriting? Some folks write an eccentric hand and pride themselves on it, but eccentricity is not distinction. If

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it were, it would be easy enough to gain it by walking on all fours or by wearing one's coat inside out.

Perhaps, if one wrote a legible and distinguished hand, one would take time to write courteous notes to friends and not leave them to unsocial secretaries. There may be times when a rubber stamp is an appropriate time-saver for the hurried and great, but the rubber stamp habit of mind is devoid of romance and not conducive to an imaginative relationship between friends. And no friendships are worth while unless they have a margin of imagination. The actual seems always to need a little stimulation.

I remember once getting a farewell letter from a friend who was leaving suddenly for Europe. It was multigraphed and I got rather a shock, for somehow I thought I would rather have waited until she herself had time to write, say a postal, as there must be something individual in an individual relationship. That lady is now an ex-friend. The modish attitude toward life is now the casual; and the serious is considered a bore. I am not reactionary enough to ask for a revival of the unfit, but I am asking whether there may not be a place for some of our discarded traditions in the readjustment of the old and the new which must surely come. We might have a re-establishment of a more general responsibility and a broader "noblesse oblige."

All one needs is a little imagination and every little helps. Indeed, there may be much art of imagination even in the putting on of a postage stamp.



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Try it, and see if you cannot at least make the outside of your letters more interesting. The Japanese try to arrange their postage stamps harmoniously.

Though many people are not ashamed if they write an illegible hand, they are at least embarrassed when they speak indistinctly. Though they may be like the English lord of mid-Victorian fame whose friend asked him why he did not write so that it could be read. "Why," he said, "then people would find out how I spell." So if people spoke distinctly, we might hear a lot of things they said that were as well left unsaid, and they might find it out too.

In the fashion of the late 'forties, and for a decade or two afterward, we spoke as we wrote—or tried to—and our style was as stilted as the handwriting of that period. Now we write as we speak and try to establish a current or newspaper type of writing. There may be a happy medium between the two styles.

The principles of good speaking are the same whether in private or in public. The difference is in degree, not in kind. And the best way to speak to two thousand people is relatively the best way to speak to two friends. When we speak earnestly and spontaneously from an inward emotion, and are not thinking of the impression we want to make, we make an impression. As Emerson says, "The best manners are no manners." What he meant was that if our feeling toward others was harmonious, our

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social technique would correspond. If we are gifted with good feeling and intense feeling, we shall usually succeed in making ourselves understood. But if we are not so gifted, we must all learn in some degree how to speak, as we learn other expressions. Then we may find out for the first time what it is that we want to say. Art is always the expression of a vision. If our vision is not clear, no artistic technique will help us to express it. We call that technique by another name—that is, the mechanics of speech. If we are not able to see clearly for ourselves, we see feebly through something expressed by someone else, which usually results in imitation.

That is the reason why slang seems vulgar and insincere. It is the easiest way to speak without saying anything definite or original, and without having any feeling for what we say. The sign that we see in the florist's window, "Say it with flowers," is the same kind of a crutch. It is meant for the tired business man or other tired souls who are too slovenly or too slothful to think what would be a graceful, gracious, or ingratiating thing to say to a sweetheart. If you have the money or credit, it is easy to order ten dollars' worth of flowers, or at least flowers that cost ten dollars. Standardized speech is clearly no more acceptable than standardized romance to even the dullest lover.

If Garrison had been accustomed to use "swear words"—another kind of slang—he could not have

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said in the heat of his indignation that the Constitution which sanctioned slavery was “a covenant death and an agreement with hell.” He would merely have said, “To hell with the Constitution of these United States.” He would have said nothing distinctive, but something which has been said before and will be said many times again by persons who, unlike him, will not become immortal.

## CHAPTER XX

### LEARNING TO SEE



HERE is much amusement in finding new ways of looking at old things, in discovering that new combinations freshen familiar belongings and surroundings, in re-arranging a much-used room by turning the furniture this way or that and discovering new groupings for chairs, tables, and furnishings especially suited to it. Perhaps the placing of the sofa between the two windows instead of next to the fireplace changes the whole situation and we see the room in a new light.

So it is with natural things around us which we notice even less than we do furniture or clothes—the view of the street from our city windows, a familiar landscape, or the plants and flowers in our gardens. Some of us naturally notice things and some do not; but most of us are not apt to notice or get new views of the things by which we are constantly surrounded. We do not really see them in the sense of perceiving their uses to us, or their connection with other things. They are so familiar that our

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*Silhouette of pin oak.*



*Silhouette of Japanese maple.*

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eyes have become blind to them. Nothing is so blinding as habit.

We would perceive much of intense interest going on around us if we only took time to look and observe. Nature is not unerring. She does not always create perfection. She does only the best she can do at the time. No one can ask more of her, or, for that matter, of us. It is not always expedient for Nature to express beauty, but Nature's designs are always adapted to their uses, which will produce beauty in the end if not in particular instances. Use, adaptation, and service, we can learn from Nature. In design we learn that beauty is economy of line—just enough line to go where that line is needed and no more.

If our immediate surroundings are observed, we find them full of suggestions for new combinations of form and color which can be of great value in ideas for designs, for furnishing our homes, or for dressing ourselves. Why should we always be imitating somebody else or looking up to something that has been done by another as an authority not to be questioned? Perhaps that person lived in the time of Pericles or earlier, and knew nothing of our needs. That does not prove that the old things are not beautiful. We do not need to copy or imitate real works of art. The same lack of self-confidence makes us afraid to trust ourselves in furnishing our houses, or in dressing, or in making a pattern for our own contrivances. We may make very bad mis-

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takes, but after all it is better to make our own mistakes than to imitate someone else's successes. We can, at least, have more fun making them and we may develop back-bone as a by-product. In matters of art there is no need to be afraid of doing



*Silhouette of columbine.*

a thing because it has not been 'done before. New things are not necessarily bad things. The heavy-weight critics may descend upon us, but their rôle is to disturb us into thinking for ourselves. However there are kinder and more progressive methods

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of provoking thought, and we can take them if we wish.

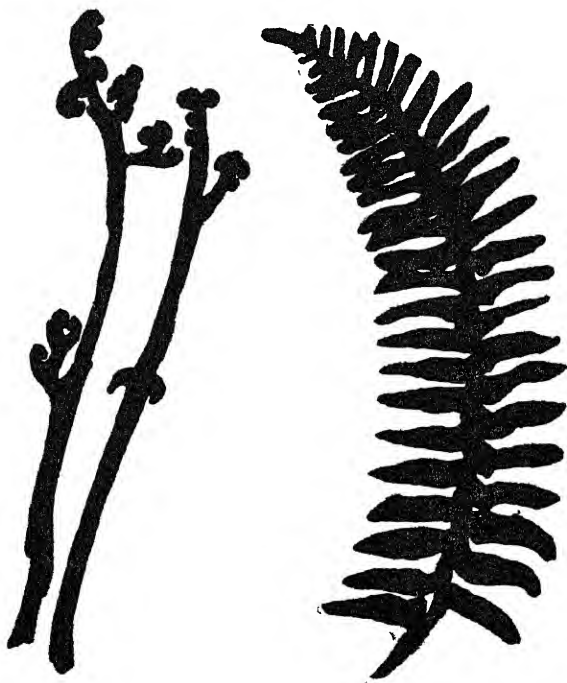
We can only know our shortcomings through experiments. Through experiments we get more experience. By using our hands, we develop our minds. Failure is more easily perceived in physical things than in mental things. If we are physically lazy, most people will know it: but if we are mentally lazy, most people will not know it and we may not know it ourselves. If we start to work out a vision concretely and do not succeed, we can easily see where we have failed. But we may not always know if we get mentally confused. Doing things exactly and accurately reacts on our mental processes because there is no progress without putting ideas into practice. We may think we have no time to bother with doing things with our hands or creating beauty, but it takes much less time to get our minds and our hearts together and to walk through life with our eyes open than it does to stumble through with our eyes closed. An awakened sight in one field reacts on other efforts.

I once had a pupil who said when she began her lessons that she was very uncertain whether or not she would be able to keep them up. Her husband was a minister in a suburban parish. She was his prop and understudy and there was a sick mother-in-law to boot. I diplomatically suggested that we would begin anyway. It was in the spring when we started, so we began by studying the growth of



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the trees, twigs, and leaf buds, and developing designs from the suggestions we got from them. We drew them, blue-printed them, and became so inti-



*Silhouette of young fern and a developed leaf.*

mate with them that we knew them all forwards and backwards. We found not only that every tree, even of the same kind, grew as it wanted to grow, but that while perhaps there was no perfect leaf on a tree, the detail in each leaf aimed at a perfect type.

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We put these designs to all kinds of use. She kept on and I did not hear anything more about her husband or the sick mother-in-law. One day I asked her how they were. "Oh, everybody is getting on," she said, "including myself. My lessons are so much fun that they really help the parish and even my husband is seeing something outside his church duties."

What one person has done, another can do, or, if not the same thing, at least something as interesting and perhaps more appealing to that person. Nature has an infinite variety of suggestions and we can learn to see them and choose what appeals to each of us. There need be no excuse for doing what we want to do unless, indeed, we wish to apologize for being ourselves. The truth is, we are usually making excuses for not doing what we do not want to do. We may not wish to decorate our houses or to wear tasteful garments, but if we want to decorate, we can do it as easily as other things.

Most decorative forms which successfully fill an artistic design originate in some remote natural suggestion. At least, Nature can start us thinking along original lines and we can go on originating long after we have forgotten what our first suggestion came from.

Don't say that you "cannot draw a straight line." You don't have to. If you are making a mechanical drawing, you can use a mechanical tool like a ruler. Technicalities usually take care of themselves after

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we once get our vision cleared up. What we first need is to find out what we want.

Why not use a new pattern for the next lace collar, or for the table cover, or hangings? The easiest way would be to buy a stenciled pattern, to borrow or copy something from the lady across the street. But the most interesting way would be to get our own suggestion for design from the forms of plants, trees, or flowers—not by making drawings—most of us cannot make drawings—but by making shadow pictures with blue-print paper which gives us records of the silhouettes of natural forms. The detail is entirely eliminated in these shadow pictures. The silhouettes do not give details. They just show the big structural masses and characteristic lines of growth, the architecture of each leaf, or plant, or flower. And through them we always discover the purpose of each type, so that even the weeds of our door yard may be of great decorative service.

The materials for making shadow pictures of leaves and flowers are only a yard or so of blue-print paper, which must be fresh, and a piece of thick window glass (fourteen by eighteen is a convenient size), then a board two inches larger all round than the glass, or say, eighteen by twenty-two inches.

We first gather a quantity of leaves and flowers of several varieties and put them in a pail of cold water to keep until we wish to use them. Next make a pad of six layers of newspaper sheets and lay it

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down on the board, then cut the blue-print paper the size of the window glass and lay it on the news-



*Stencil made from a silhouette of an Iris plant.*

paper pad. Pin all firmly down together with thumb tacks. Do not expose the blue-print paper unneces-

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sarily to the light or it will become "light struck" and will not print.

The blue-print paper is of a yellowish tone on one side. This side is the right side of the paper which must be laid face down on the sheets of newspaper. On this side of the paper the shadow prints appear when the printing is finished.

When we have everything ready and can go ahead, select a leaf or flower for the first experiment and lay it down on the back of the blue-print paper, press down the thicker portions, and arrange the stems naturally. Then place the piece of window glass over the plant leaf or flower and carry it out in the full sunlight to print. It must stay there in full sunlight at least twenty minutes before the printing process is completed.

After the printing is finished, take out the blue-print paper and wash it carefully in a tub of water; the shadow picture then appears. Put the blue-print in a tub of fresh water and let it soak there for an hour, then spread it out on several thicknesses of newspaper with a weight on top until it is dry. Make as many as possible at one sitting; it is far easier. First, single leaves or flowers, then groups of leaves and groups of flowers. These prints are really outlines for decorative purposes. They are excellent records and will be most useful for applications of different kinds. They will open our eyes to the things we have never seen before and make us wish to do all kinds of decorative work with them.

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Then we can hunt up technical information about stencils, wood blocks, or other kinds of decorative execution and carry out our designs for specific purposes. We may not become past masters all at once, especially in technique, but we shall have lots of fun from our first work and that will be an incentive to go on to something more ambitious.

## CHAPTER XXI

### COLOR ITSELF



Someone will ask me: "What is your favorite color? It must be blue, you wear it so much." And I say, "It is not blue, though I wear it all the time, but that is only because it harmonizes with my personal color scheme."

Or else someone will ask, "Oh, don't you think blue is a beautiful color?" And I always want to answer by asking another question, "Don't you think G is a beautiful note on the piano?" Of course G might be a beautiful note on the piano provided the piano was in tune, and so might the color be in tune and beautiful, but an isolated note, or an isolated color, would not hold our interest very long. Think what it would be if you became interested in a certain word because you thought that the word in itself was beautiful, and kept repeating it all day long. The real interest in things—that is, a permanent interest, is in their relation to other things, and isolated notes, colors, or words, do not interest us very long if we have active, creative minds.

A woman of my acquaintance painted her chimney

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breast a bright blue, a color which in itself was "off pitch," as they say in music. As it happened, it did not and could not harmonize with anything in her room. But she was immensely pleased with it and it represented the extent of her color vision at that time. It was the best she could then do, and though neither artistic nor in good taste it was an expression of what she felt about color. To have chilled her enthusiasm with a verdict would not have helped. She enjoyed that large patch of unrelated color. As soon as she began to lose interest in it, she would probably begin to ask herself about color and would get a larger vision about harmony, for the best way to understand a thing is to do something with or about it.

The art of color arrangement, or colorhythm, is not a popular pastime. Many people get emotion from color in Nature, but few appreciate the beauty and magic of color in art. Fewer still have the power to create color arrangements, harmonies, and combinations, to work with color tones, just as a musical composer works with musical tones, to think of color as a thing in itself, and not as a by-product of form to be spread over some object of three dimensions, before it is recognized as color. Perhaps some day, soon, it will be discovered that color vibration makes forms organically its own. Color and sound can be made into patterns just as one makes patterns in other mediums. Color compositions have the same principles of art as music. Each



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of their structures is based on scales of tone intervals; and color, like music, must have quality and value. Color tones, or degrees of color, must be put in certain order, or arranged in certain groups. To get an exact interval between each tone produces harmony in the whole composition. In music the scale of C major has exact intervals which make its characteristic harmony. The intervals in major scales are whole tones arranged in exact order to get harmony. In the scale of C major we strike C. To make color harmony the same thing must be done. We may make a composition in whole tones or half tones, but the tones must always be put in certain order to get harmony.

Many people have a natural taste for color, but taste is not art. It often produces unconscious art and can be developed. Every vision of harmony must be interpreted through a conscious knowledge of effects. To know what we do consciously is not to limit our vision, but to extend it.

We get impressions mostly by words and phrases. We do not even see natural color in its full beauty, because we have some preconceived notions of what it ought to be. We have been told that shadows are gray and many of us still believe that they are gray, though the modern schools of painting and decoration have given many demonstrations that they may be any color under the sun or stars. A woman who was decorating her studio wanted her walls painted a warm, yellowish, gray, but she was unable to make

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the painter understand about mixing the color, so she got him to bring her two pails, one filled with yellow and the other with gray paint. "What is this color called?" she asked him, pointing to the gray paint. "Gray, madam," he answered. "And this?" she asked, pointing to the yellow. "Yellow, madam," he said. "Now," she instructed him, "please pour the paints together and we will have our wall color." "No, madam," he answered firmly, "I could not do that." "What do you mean?" she said, "you could not do that? Do you mean you are not strong enough to do it?" "No, madam," he answered, "I could not do that, because I would not know what to call the color after it was mixed." That painter man is not the only person who knows color by its name only, and consequently, lip-stick red and chewing gum gray are popular colors.

When a color has lost its power to vibrate, when it has no tone quality and cannot get into harmony with other colors, it is useless. It has become unsocial, as it were, and is like a voice that is "off key" in the chorus. The value and usefulness of any color is its capacity to get into relation with other color tones and to set up with them vibrations which make beauty and harmony. It must establish the quality of rhythm; therefore, color arrangements might be called colorhythms. For that reason a color note might not be pleasing when isolated, but would be beautiful if brought into relation with other notes. True quality in color is more easily perceived by

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the way it acts under the influence of light when its shadows become defined. Then, if it is true color, a certain vibrant transparency shows its capacity for rhythm. Quality is a subtle thing to define in any connection. It can best be explained by saying that things show a tendency to reach out and establish relations with other things. It is a kind of beauty which moves us even more than mere correct proportion. An egotist does not have this quality and therefore is without genuine personal appeal.

New schools of painting and music, or individuals who have created new types of rhythm in color or sound, are usually misunderstood, and criticized by those who misunderstand until the unusual intervals of the colorhythm or the new type of musical harmony become familiar. There have been no instances before of these types to give them recognized authority, so it is hard to understand what they are supposed to convey. When the eye perceives the exact relation of an unfamiliar combination of two or more colors, a new conception is conveyed to the mind, just as tones of music are conveyed to the mind by the ear.

There are two types of color value: the actual color itself—that is, a blue, green or red color note; and the degree of the note, whether it be light or dark in tone. The intervals between, the color value, are harmonious if they set up a relation with their vibrations. Again, color tone can be explained by comparing it to musical tones, because we are more

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familiar with the terms in music. For instance, the deepest color note of blue has a deeper quality than the deepest color note of red, and red has a deeper quality than yellow. Each has a different color rhythm and sets up different vibrations. Deep blue could be called the bass voice in color, red the baritone, or mezzo-soprano, and yellow the tenor or soprano. These comparisons are suggested only, and can be carried farther and the different tones of the individual colors compared with different qualities of voice.

Most color compositions are monotone arrangements, especially when applied to personal dress and house furnishings. The amateur decorator, or clothes designer, is in a perfect frenzy to "match" everything. But things don't match: they match only as nearly as they can be gotten in shops. Therefore, this arrangement is not a monotone arrangement, but a monotonous arrangement. A monotone scale goes from light to dark through all the tones of any color. All shades of blue, from light to dark, all shades of any other color, from light to dark, may be used in a color composition. Harmony must be created by using the correct intervals between the tones of the same color, just as with the intervals between tones of different colors. There are many color tones which we probably do not see at all, as our minds have become limited by the somewhat arbitrary rainbow which we accept as our standard.

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Degrees of color tones can be recognized by a color-blind person who cannot see actual color. In the most common cases of color blindness, the person cannot distinguish between red and green, but can recognize the degree of the color tone or value in the red or green, whether it is light, medium, or dark. Therefore, a color-blind person can get pleasure out of a color value arrangement who cannot see the actual colors in the group. For him it corresponds to a composition in black and white, though probably, not being able to separate colors, there is something in the color quality which counts for more than black and white to the color blind; since harmony is subjective rather than objective.

There are any number of scientific color theories, but with the actual mixing of physical pigment, the old theory of blue, red, and yellow, as primaries, with their complementaries of orange, green, and violet, holds good. In working with colored light rays, a different color scale is developed. But working with actual paints or pigments, where one wishes to maintain a color balance, a complementary, like orange, can be used to emphasize or subdue a primary like blue. The complementary can be used either as a full tone or modified. In really harmonious color schemes, all three primaries must be included in either their primary or their complementary form. Even in monotone schemes the color qualities will be far more beautiful if instead of using a straight color it is modified by its comple-

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mentaries or primaries. For instance, in a monotone of blue, the colorhythm will be far more beautiful if, instead of using a straight blue tone throughout, the blue is modified by one of the other primaries—that is, modified by red, or yellow, and so make a combination of blue, violet blue, or green blue. If in any color combination there is too much of one color, a note of complementary color can be introduced. If in any combination the blue is overpowering, orange can be introduced. In larger amounts it will subdue the blue, and in small amounts it will emphasize it. With green, a red note can be introduced; with violet, yellow. These instances are only the most primary forms of colorhythm. With color, as with other tone values, everything counts, and no note of any kind can be introduced without being arranged in the first place as part of the harmony.

Very successful color schemes can be made by using what painters would call warm and cold tones of the same color in combination. If the scheme is based on blue, a violet-blue, or blue with red in it, can be combined with a blue with yellow, or a greenish blue. The violet blue is the cold tone and the greenish blue is the warm tone. Red combined with blue makes a cold tone, or red with yellow a warm tone. Greenish yellow is cold, and red yellow warm. With color combinations everything is relative, or is influenced by the color with which it is combined. A color, which by itself would be called

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cold, may be made to look warm by using a still colder tone in combination.

Colors in and out of doors have different ways of acting. When out of doors sunlight falls directly on a color, the yellow quality in the sunlight influences it and warms it. Shadows out of doors have an atmospheric quality, or cool tone, reflected from the sky, running from all tones of blue violet to red violet. On near objects the shadows are relatively warm, while the farther off an object is the more the degree of color is lessened by the perspective and by the intervening atmosphere. Thus, as outdoors colors actually have the yellow of the sunlight added to them, by contrast the shadows are affected and thrown into the complementary tone of violet. On gray days and in twilight, colors show their true tones uninfluenced by light or shade. Indoors the order is reversed. Color in shadows is usually warm, and cold where the light strikes it. Under artificial light, of course, both shadows and light can be made almost anything, as one sees in the theater. In deep woods where the sunlight does not actually come, shadows have the same transparent quality as indoors in daylight. They may, however, be influenced by the light coming through the trees and sometimes a wood interior has a tonality in which the prevailing color is green.

Tonality in color scheme is that color which pervades all the colors in it—is its common denominator. In this way a color scheme might be toned

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throughout into green or red, or blue, or any other color. In the theater, colors are changed by using colored lights on them and the same scene changed from daylight to moonlight. A recent lighting invention changes the actual forms in a stage set by throwing lights on them, concealing certain colors, while certain others are used to bring out varying details. In this way a different set is shown without a shifting of scenery.

One good way to get experience with color is to use dye pigments, trying various combinations of colors. If they are not pleasing, analyze them and see what color note is too dominating or too submerged. If you strike on a particularly pleasing combination of color, be sure to analyze that also, for it will help enormously in future work. The actual creation of color from dye pigments on fabrics is so fascinating that it is a wonder more people have not attempted a few experiments. The very worst that can happen is to spoil a few yards of material. That is not in itself a calamity. The technique of dyeing is not difficult and with it, as with other forms of art, one can learn in two ways: the long way, by working by oneself; or the shorter way of learning from the experience of others.



## CHAPTER XXII

### ART AND ARTIFICIALITY



MOST people do some kind of work. The most fortunate, or the wisest, do the kind they love. The others do not really work; they drudge. We cannot say, drudge mechanically, for mechanics can be as alive as anything else if we put ourselves into them. The best of all work is to work for a living at what we like to do, or, in other words, to be an artist. Then we represent our thoughts and feelings in our work and it becomes a visible part of us as a reflection of ourselves. In this way our work seems real to us and we have no sense of dissatisfaction with it. The medium that we use makes no difference. It might be the sculptor's clay or the cook's carrots.

There is one long road to art—the love of the work for itself, consecration, and an untiring thoroughness to accomplish what we want to do. We must have temperament, but not the kind of temperament which might be more correctly called temperature, an unhealthful fever that does not thrive on hard work. We need atmosphere, but not fog. We are born, or born again, into a love of beauty

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and a desire to express it. We can learn only what means to choose by which the love and the desire continue to grow and we to grow with them.

In *What is Art?* Tolstoi writes of a boy who tells a story about meeting a wolf in the forest. He calls the boy an artist, because in expressing his emotion of fear he not only explains fear to himself but also makes others feel fear. In art, moreover, because it is the reflection of an emotion, there is no reproduction. It must vary constantly. We do not feel any emotion twice in the same way. Any attempt at reproduction is an imitation, and we can imitate ourselves as well as we can imitate others. It is not an easy thing to sustain an impulse in any medium, but it is far better to leave off where our impulse stops than to continue artificially. Rodin, the great French sculptor, worked on a subject as long as his feeling for it lasted, then he stopped. Some of his most famous work is left with part of the subject unrepresented. Rodin's purpose was so strong and his expression of it so definite that even a part of his work actually done in marble represented the whole. Many people have copied Rodin's style and left out parts of their subjects, thinking that Rodin meant to make an unfinished composition. The last act of a play is often an anti-climax written after the play is really finished, and the author has exhausted all feeling for the work. Then another act is put in merely to satisfy the managers' and the audiences' ideas of how life must be fixed

## Art and Artificiality

up with a happy ending to suit everybody—and the box office.

Art is anarchistic in form as well as in idea. No laws can be laid down for it. As we reflect our visions and emotions, we create new types, new only in the sense that the results are unfamiliar combinations of forms and ideas. We are all continuances of the past. We are the past up to date, and what we say is new only as the work of a different individual. Each new form of art follows the vision of the individual worker and results in new types. Musical compositions and paintings are rarely understood at first, perhaps because we are not used to the new arrangement of their parts and, being unfamiliar with them, we are apt to call them bad. But the parts always exist and are assembled by each artist who sees a vision of them as a new combination in a new setting.

Beauty is more than an appearance. It is the co-ordination and the co-operation of parts, and it is the business of art to produce harmony and beauty. An architect assembles the parts of a house in his head and arranges them into an harmonious building. The painter sees the parts of pictures and arranges them into a composition. The musician does the same. Beethoven, although he became deaf, continued to make musical compositions. To be an artist, whether a painter, an actor, a musician, a sculptor, one must see a vision of the work as a whole and preserve the mutual influences of all the

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variety of the parts. For instance, almost anyone can see that the leaves of the same tree are each a little different from the other, but an artist will perceive the intention in each tree and create a perfect type of leaf from the endless individual varieties. The Greeks are credited with having developed a perfect type of physical beauty. They did not have it themselves, but they did discover the proportions of perfect physique, because they caught a vision of its parts and assembled and related them into a perfect whole. What is called the Greek type of beauty is seen in every nation. It is not nationally Greek, it is ideally Greek. It is the type which was cut in marble by the Grecian sculptors.

When a principle of art is discovered, or a set of harmonies expressed in any medium, something has been explained to the artist and by the artist to others. Art is an extension of every side of our lives and if based on fundamental principle explains us to ourselves and connects us with unknown sides of life. A principle is easily recognized. I once knew two women who were teachers of French and other languages. I asked them their methods. They said that they laid emphasis principally on the pronunciation of the vowel sounds in language. Their method was to classify vowel sounds in all languages and to point out those which were similar and those which were different. First, they established the fact that the greatest difficulty in all languages lies mostly in the pronunciation of the vowel sounds.

## Art and Artificiality

The same is true of different dialects of the same language. I once asked an Irish friend of mine how to pronounce Irish English. He said, "Emphasize your vowels and draw them out." Try it, if you have to play an Irish rôle in amateur theatricals. It is not the whole secret of Irish dialect, but it is its most characteristic feature.

I remember seeing the illustrations of a child's book with a rabbit hiding in some leaves and grass,



*"Just leaves."*

and I said to the author, "What extraordinary leaves. They don't seem like any variety I know." "No," said he; "I asked my illustrator what kind they were and he said, 'Oh, no particular kind—just leaves.'" There are many other things which come under the generic name "just leaves"—houses, pictures, songs, musical compositions—just mechanistic performances done ignorantly to make an impression on someone or on ourselves.

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When we have nothing to say, we begin to imitate or to exhibit, and as imitators we desire only external effects and the results are artificial. We are then seeking sensations, not experiences, so we make replicas of ourselves because we can make them more easily, and then accept ourselves as authorities, or as standards, for our own work. But we cannot grow unless we extend ourselves through creative effort, and all work is useless as art unless it inspires us and others to do other creative work.

There are many different ways of doing a thing wrong but only one way of doing it right, and unless we have perfected our plan of work, this is not always the easiest way. In fact, there is no easy way. We are born with only the love of beauty and the desire to express it, and we can learn the best means only by consistent and consecrated effort. Imitation is an easy way and it is natural, perhaps, to mistake the shell for the substance and to wish to imitate. So we accept standards as symbols of authority, lean up against them, and substitute them for original thought. This is working from the outside in, instead of working from an impulse out to the form.

A play builder goes about with a note-book and hears a clever sentence. "Ah," says he, or she, "this will be useful to me in one of my plays. Perhaps one of my characters can say it in the second scene of the first act." But people in plays do not grow that way any more than they do in life. The

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idea might be used, but it is effective only when it has become part of a character. In the art of the theater the characters in a play evolve their sayings from the situation they find themselves in. They happen to be certain kinds of people and they respond and react in characteristic ways.

Everyone is naturally anxious to be understood. But in some curious way we are afraid that we will not be understood if we are ourselves. So imitations usually come through mistrust of our own powers and lack of confidence. We are hypnotized into believing by repetitions of some standardized sentence or other quotation, or by a piece of current slang. But slang and quotations and repetitions keep us from doing our own thinking and, consequently, from enlarging our experience. For instance, we quote something like this from Shakespeare: "There's nothing good nor bad but thinking makes it so." If we accept this without thinking of the reason, our mental process can hardly be called thinking. For though Shakespeare is an authority on play building, his philosophy may be questioned. We must first find out what we mean for ourselves. To repeat what someone else has said does not add anything to our own feeling about it.

An actor may paint his face and arrange his hair and dress to represent a portrait of Louis XIV, as he understands that particular character. An empty-headed girl or boy will "make up" to repre-

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sent nothing, just because "everybody does that." In that case, the make-up degenerates into kalsomine and the costume into mode. An oak does not grow spreading or tall just because other oaks grow that way. If it did, it would become like the tin trees in a child's box of toys. It takes its own personal form, because it responds to every smallest influence of wind and sun and soil and other trees. It is said that Henry Irving recited the Lord's Prayer in such a way as to draw tears from the eyes of his hearers. That could be done only by one who could so appreciate it, as to make it his own prayer. A dress and a setting of the character might have helped even Irving to make an impression, but no dress or setting would enable one to say it effectively or affectingly, to whom it had become a mere churchly form.

Art is useful only when it makes us grow, when it gives an understanding of things about us. We paint Nature in order to interpret it to ourselves, and when we understand any phase of it it is no longer necessary to continue that kind of expression. There will probably come a time when what we now call art will be obsolete, because we have come into a more direct understanding of the nature of things. Instead of seeing beauty indirectly through the interpretation of our own work, or of someone else's, we shall directly perceive its harmonies. The process in the performance of art is like this: we feel a desire to express a certain thing



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and we interpret it in our own personal terms plus an element which is called beauty, or harmony, and which in its essential nature is a universal principle. In earlier phrase, it is "The word made flesh."

In art there is no good or bad. There is only the related and the unrelated. The unrelated thing may be in its very nature unsocial or unserviceable, or it may not yet have been brought together with the things with which it belongs. "Good" and "bad" are perquisites of the reformer and belong to the moralist, but not to the artist. The greatest proof of the reality of art is the emotional reaction it calls out in others, which should result in harmonious action on their part; for art helps to an understanding of oneself, and creative expression can become a conscious development, an experience as well as a growth. Art gives us an understanding of life, and when we express ourselves we come into a realization of things outside ourselves. Then we find that there is really nothing outside, that everything is a part of a conscious and inevitable growth.

The person with too much egotism is not a serviceable or useful person, because his or her consciousness is limited by self. The nation that is only national is not so useful as one that is international, as we are finding out every day. But we must find ourselves before others can find us, and no nation can be useful internationally until it has been grounded first as a national expression.

Undoubtedly, art began in the primitive ages

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when man, having completed a cooking utensil, a knife, or a bowl, and feeling particularly happy over his performance, added a little ornament to express his joy of living. And in reality, art should be a joyful expression. The nearest approach to the joyful art of the primitives, and unfortunately not very near, are the modern arts and crafts, or, as they are sometimes called, the lesser arts. Why lesser, one does not know, because they are often more an expression of real feeling than other forms of art. The difference is rather in degree than in kind.

An art that is propaganda is likewise not art. The disciples of art for art's sake and art for everybody are not in different camps. Beauty expressed for its own sake enriches us all. It cannot be held in leash by any special cult. We all respond to it emotionally if it is really beauty, even though we may not be conscious of our reaction. It makes us "feel good." When art degenerates into technique, it is easily kept within exclusive limits, because technique, or performances, are not understood by those of simpler minds and do not reach greater minds. So-called educational art is not art, but education. One of the most wonderful re-births of art was the Italian, which could never have happened, except for the long period of darkness in the Middle Ages when hundreds of craftsmen were working by themselves, groping about for individual expression. They were the roots of the later growth and created the feeling for beauty which under more favorable

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conditions fostered the development of the great individual artists.

But the art of America will not grow through its artists; rather it will grow through workers in other branches of science or even in mechanics, who are sincerely and whole-heartedly trying to establish the fundamental relations of their special work to everyday life. They are working more conscientiously and carefully than any other group, and they are more careful of their facts. They are less subject to outside influences of fads and imitations, through which art cannot grow. It is through these fearless youngsters, who are not afraid to experiment with life, that art will become more universally understood in America.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### HANDS AND THE MAN



IN the latter part of the nineteenth century, in this country, different groups of people made efforts to revive interest in the arts and crafts. Some of the results were beneficial, but more were artificial, for efforts to revive anything from the outside usually come by trying to interest others for the cause we wish to revive without actually doing anything about it ourselves. We cannot get life into things that way; the process is more fundamental. The best way to interest anybody in anything is to do it enthusiastically and whole-heartedly oneself. A small center of individual enthusiasm spreads to others through its creative appeal.

The real importance and influence of this which was called an art revival was its effect on machine-made products, or on commercial art. As a by-product, it produced a number of good craftsmen—bookbinders, weavers, dyers, potters, glass-makers, silversmiths, and others. Inasmuch as these worked for the joy of the working, they had a real influence on the art of the country.

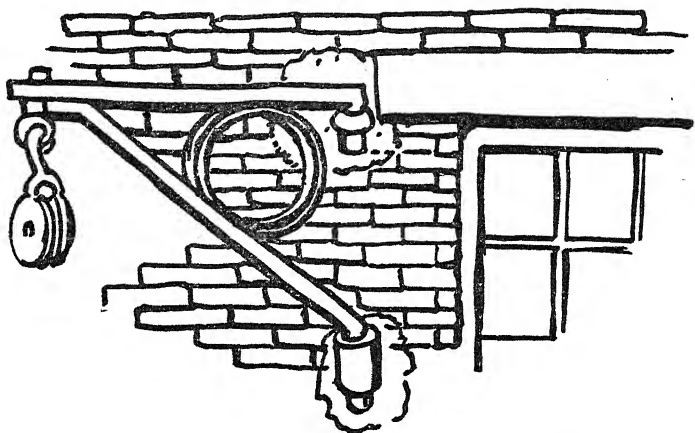
## Hands and the Man

In the height of the revival we had debates on the merits of the hand-made *versus* the machine-made. We had a high respect for logic and became extremists. We took sides. There were those who believed that all machine-made things were ugly and advocated the hand-made to the exclusion of everything else. Some of us were not so critical and liked to stand up for the current order, because we knew that most things had to be made by machinery, so we in turn said that all machine-made things were beautiful. Doubtless, we felt ourselves so much a part of things as they are that we had a personal pride in proving them good. This is as unsound as it is to believe that everything made in other times is good, when we know that the only things that have lasted until now were those that had some merit. The poor things have been lost or destroyed.

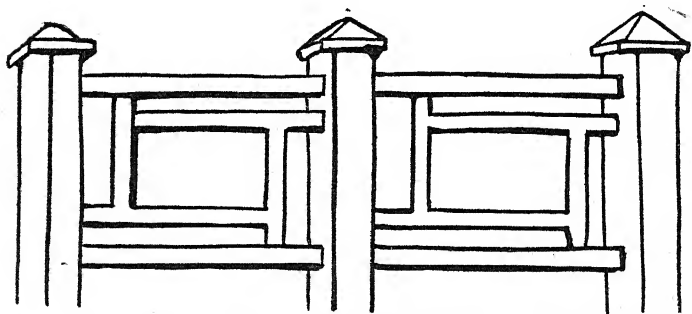
To make things arbitrarily by hand in the hope that this will bring about a millennium, is about as futile as it is to paint with our toes because it is more difficult. To grow we must work with the spirit of the times, understand it, and improve it with a greater vision. Genius does this and recognizes that each period is right as far as it can grow, and that at all times there is a forward movement. It may not be visible in our bailiwick. We may be the advance guard that is waiting for some other part of the world to catch up with us. Growing together is as much a part of progress as growing alone.

The difficulty we have is one of confused vision.

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*A swinging crane is also a good looking article.*



*An artistic fence made of eight-inch planks and strips of one by two inches.*

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In spite of the fact that things around us most always seem mixed up and confused, we must keep our vision clear. We usually confuse the hand-made and the machine-made, and the most sensitive among us shudder at the word commercial. The line between what is really art and what is really commercialism is difficult to draw because everything has some characteristic which it shares with its opposite. The basic difference lies in the fact that art is really unique in feeling and in expression. It is not reproductive, but creative. It often sells, but not so often as the most exclusive artists themselves would wish, so on that side it is commercial.

The difference between art, reproduction, and commercialism is best illustrated by a story that John La Farge used to tell. He had two very rare Japanese books, not printed books, but books of Japanese drawings evidently very old. He took them to an art expert and appraiser to find their commercial value. Pointing to one of the books the appraiser said: This book is worth so and so much. I know this because I once saw another somewhat like it." For the other he said, "I could not give you the price because I have never seen anything the least like it. I have nothing with which I could compare it commercially. You might get almost anything for it from a connoisseur who took a fancy to it."

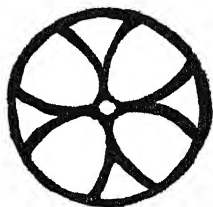
There is always a choice, even among things which have not any exclusive art value, for some machine-made things are vastly better than others, as for

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instance, those ready-made clothes which give us a good deal of choice in models. But they give more than that. They give us a chance to look alike, which is one of the first steps in democracy and does very well until we can find why we want to look different than other people. We could make our own clothes, of course, but if we had to wear them we might look worse even than in ready-made ones. It requires a



*The wheel of a hand grist mill  
which looks like a detail of  
Gothic ornament.*



*The wheel of a car brake.*

*Ruskin says "beauty grows from utility and needs." These serviceable objects through proper constructions have developed decorative lines.*

great deal of poise to carry off home-made clothes, for most of us are inarticulate about dressing ourselves and it takes a great deal of individual style to wear badly made clothes, as much as it does to even wear the extreme of fashion.

The manufactured article of today can have elements of art, for a good design can be reproduced by machinery. Over-ornamentation and poor designs are almost always intended to conceal poor



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materials. Good material can be used practically without ornament, for its beauty is texture and color. Cast-iron stoves are poorly designed purposely to conceal defective casting by over-ornamentation. A machine-made product, honestly reproducing a good design, is perfectly acceptable. We must be quite clear as to our purposes. If we cannot make money except by substituting poor material for labor, because the cost of labor is higher than the cost of material, let us make it clear to ourselves that this is an economic problem but not an æsthetic one. Or if we use poor and complicated designs to conceal poor material, let us do that also with determination. Things which are born of necessity are made without over-ornamentation, and when well constructed their decorative features grow out of their construction. Beauty grows only out of right conditions. Unconsciously, the artist acts as a transmitter.

In our colonial days, the pioneers made their own furniture out of the native woods, with hand tools, probably hand-made tools. This furniture is now considered by art experts to be rarer in quality than the furniture which was brought over here by the Colonials from the mother country. Early American black walnut and oak pieces hand made with hand-tools have a greater art value than English furniture of an earlier period somewhat more mechanically made. American furniture from native woods is being collected for our museums, as an

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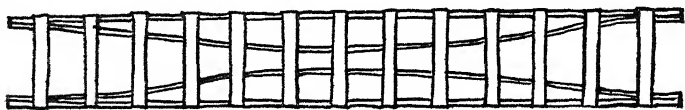
example of what we Americans used to do once upon a time.

Somebody in our pioneer 'days, between intervals of fighting Indians, built a chair for himself, a high-backed chair with winged sides, so it could be used



*The ordinary chain of commerce is very decoratively constructive.*

in front of an open fire and keep the wind from boring down his back. There were side arms also, where a plaid could be tucked in to keep his knees warm. So a chair grew. Now we copy models of winged chairs and get them all wrong because we do not work either intuitively or intentionally. We



*A ladder made of strips of one by two inches which is very strong and besides is decorative in appearance.*

copy a model of a model and do not know or think why they had high backs or wings, nor do we care. We take no thought of the conditions which produced the chair and consequently have no creative imagination about it. If we would just start to make a good chair, one which we had either feelings or knowledge about, we would get a better product than

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one produced under confused standards. Confused standards are responsible for the worst kind of work. Many people are shocked by the high buildings or towers of Manhattan Island, and think them ugly. But that is because they are reactionary and do not respond to modern conditions or modern art. Such buildings are an example of how beauty grows from an economic need.

We forget that there are many things which, though they are not made by machine, are made mechanically by hand, for when the hand is unguided by the intellect and uninspired by the emotions the results are mechanical. The human hand is the finest and ablest of all mechanisms, and when guided by the heart and brain produces the finest art. Artsmanship, or technique, is produced by the hand associated only with the mind and is far inferior to work done by a combination of hand, mind, and heart, which expresses the whole human being. In reality, therefore, anything made entirely without the use of tools or machinery is manufactured. If it is not influenced by the intelligence, it is as mechanistic as if it had been stamped out by a cutting machine.

Machinery can be controlled by the brain, but our emotions only interfere with its routine, because machines must go along smoothly and must be unaffected by change. Machines produce and reproduce with an even sameness. Our emotions vary constantly and create conditions which by constantly changing upset the routine of machinery. Machinery

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likewise upsets the artist because emotion cannot be expressed or controlled by tools. Work that is controlled by tools alone may show very clever technique or splendid method which can be acquired by almost any intelligent or painstaking person, not necessarily in any way an artist. Work produced by the hand and mind alone has nothing original to say. It is imitative and shallow.

Even so the best technique comes as a direct result and desire to say what we feel. Each emotion, when objectively expressed, finds its own form. There is no repetition because, as our emotions vary, the forms which express them vary also. Accordingly, we say in art, that there is only one right way of doing each thing and that is, its own way. Or that each emotion, objectively expressed, has its correspondence in concrete form.

The time is not yet when all of us shall work for the joy of working. We can only hold the vision until finally all see it. Even in the greatest period of Greek art, when life was supposed to have been most technically perfect, Greek civilization was upheld by slaves who had no share in the beauty they created. This is socially wasteful, for poverty, or the wrong use of the wrong thing for the wrong purpose, is a sign that decay is going on somewhere. In real art there is no waste, either in the art of being or in the art of doing. Ready-to-eat meats, ready-to-wear-out clothes, and the standardized homes are all symptoms of waste. They are not

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causes, though they are usually taken for them by our casual reformers.

The attribute of all true art is to say something more than it actually is. The broken statue shows us a vision of a perfect form. But a broken mechanism does not usually show us anything. We must



*An ax is a very decorative looking article.*

*A copper kettle which looks as if it would pour well and does pour well because its lines are constructively beautiful.*

actually piece it together again, part by part. So art takes us away from the actual and opens a little door to a vision of greater spaces than we have yet seen. But we must open the door for ourselves from the inside, not from the outside, and each one looking out of his door will see what he pleases to see.

Nowadays some of us talk art and some few of

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us talk economics. Unfortunately, we are usually speaking different languages. We should have a common dialect that would bring about a better understanding between us. For when the artist talks economics, which is rare, or when the economist talks art which is not quite so rare but which is just as confusing, neither of them realizes that the causes have their roots in the same soil. Ruskin once said, "Perfect adaptation to actual utility is the first principle of good taste, simplicity being another, the simplicity of elimination, not of poverty of ideas." Beauty grows from utility and from needs. It cannot come only from the outside; it must come from within. It is as much in the structure of life as it is in the structure of a stove, and if it does not appear on the outside we may be sure that there is something radically wrong with the structure. Art is being constantly reborn through the effort of man's creative instinct—the effort of the creative instinct in man to express itself in objective form. It exists to some degree in all of us, at least, we hope it does, else we would be in a very bad way. For one reason or another we are poor conductors; our transmitters should be labeled "Out of order."

## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE LAST ART



STYLE is perfection of expression. It is a combination of good taste and imagination. Living in style is the perfected art of getting taste and imagination into relation. We all have some imagination and some taste which we do not use or apply to every-day things, or, what we call, mistakenly, commonplace things. Our imagination is brought out only by the unusual or bizarre. Obviously, it needs a finer sense of value to find an interest in the commonplace. Anybody can easily appreciate things of unusual and distinctive beauty.

A good chef has style in cooking and combines his menu with taste and imagination, offering the correct and attractive combinations for the same meal. The musician who arranges a musical program does the same thing when selecting musical compositions which have some relation to each other and which will set each other off when played at the same concert. As with the cook, it is the combination that counts. Any unimaginative person may pass a stall of vegetables, but a real cook will get

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a thrill from a combination of egg plants, carrots, and beans, and will not serve them all with white sauces! Some of us are beginning to understand style in dress, because we have imagination enough to express ourselves by means of clothes. But we see very few people living in style. They live in luxury, in comfort, in almost everything else, but their surroundings lack the distinction which comes as the result of taste and imagination—qualities not rare in themselves, but rarely combined. Style takes living out of the commonplace and makes it distinctive, because it associates living with a vision beyond actual existence. Through imagination life has become extended to another plane; it has acquired an additional dimension, as it were.

In his Christmas sermon, Robert Louis Stevenson says, "We cannot all stand at the head of armies, but at least there is something honorable in the very length of time we have broken our teeth on the camp bread." There may even be something honorable in our connection with commonplace things and in our large commonplaceness. At least, things otherwise commonplace can be made honorable by connecting them up with a little margin of imagination. Then we find that they are more misplaced than commonplace.

If we lose our sense of adventure with life, we have lost the art of living, just as soldiers, who year in and year out eat the camp bread, would be commonplace but for their vision of victory or of some-



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thing which means romance or adventure to them. Perhaps we are too familiar with our friends, our furniture, or our clothes and have lost our vision of them. The romance has gone out of them. This may be true of small and inconsequent things like the position of a chair in our rooms. We have had it a long time and have become so used to seeing it in a certain way that we need a fresh perspective of it. Someone may come in and say: "Why that's really a very attractive chair, but it is badly placed. Why not push it up a little this way so that it will group with the rest of your furniture"—and we get a new chair and a new room through our friend's imagination. We may just as well have the fun of getting another through our own.

Often, instead of getting a fresh perspective of familiar things, we go off and buy something new; we even take a new wife or a new husband only to find ourselves at last bounded on all sides by the same things we tried to get rid of. Changing the situation does not change us. We shall get more by pioneering in familiar circumstances than we would by moving on elsewhere before we have thoroughly worked out familiar problems. I once knew a woman who, when she had the blues, ran out and bought herself a new hat. It seemed to brace her up temporarily, but her closet shelves are still filled with unbecoming and impossible millinery, creations of old and new vintages.

We become accustomed to things and situations

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and they become habit. We really know very little about anything that has become a habit, because then we have grown insensible to it. It may not always be possible to change a situation, but if we have a vision beyond it and a belief in ourselves we have gone a long ways toward freedom.

Habits are responsible for much that is commonplace. They make things commonplace by detaching them from their surroundings so that they become mechanistic. Nothing is really commonplace that succeeds in connecting itself or in finding its place among other things. The habitual way is the easiest way of doing things and of getting results, but the results may not be helpful to anyone. Sometimes we use an adjective so often that it loses its original distinctiveness. The same is true of slang. Or there are word combinations which we have seen so often that they bore us. They give us no outlet for our imaginations and make no creative appeal. Suppose we characterize everything as "charming." That would make it a generalization. It immediately lacks special interest, because generalizations are indiscriminating and cannot fit each particular case. If our imaginations are in working order, we should be able to make new combinations between adjectives and nouns.

The builders of the French language had much imagination and it has five adjectives to our one to express the same thing. Michelet says, about literary style: "No adjective should be married to any

## The Last Art

noun. Their relation should be a liaison." This is most instructive and if put into practice would break up dreary methods which make life not only commonplace but mechanistic. The French artists also every once in a while have a wish to startle us. Recently, they have invented a new feature in art which they call the broken silhouette, "*la silhouette cassé*," which they use to shake people out of their accustomed ideas in regard to certain familiar forms. They do this by destroying the regularity and familiarity of the outline.

We need more than a shaking up. We need a constructive vision. Further, we need margins and alternatives as outlets and stimulants for our imagination. Emerson wrote an essay on gifts, on what we would now call the super-gift. He said that a real gift should have a margin of imagination given with it, that would entail no obligation to either the giver or to the receiver.

I once met an old sea captain who lived on an island off the Atlantic coast. He was giving lessons in nautical lore to a young friend of his who lived around the other side of the island from himself. He had to walk round each day to give the lessons. As he was an elderly man, I asked him why he did not have his young friend come to his house. "Well," he said, "you know I am not charging him for the lessons, so I like to go round to his house."

All our concrete forms have limitations, just as a room usually has four walls. But a room with a

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good view from its windows is more livable than one which looks out against another wall. Building up anything in our imagination means to have a mental picture of it and to keep that picture clear until our objective is reached. Charlie Chaplin, the great pantomimist, succeeds because he has an unusually strong comic imagination and can picture himself in comic situations. He can do more things with a door-mat than most people with a whole cabinet of tricks.

We all have more imagination than we use. We have no outlet for it because we bark up the wrong trees. A child's imagination grows by reading fairy tales, because through its lack of experience it does not understand the facts of life. These confuse it and it has to draw on something which seems more real. Grown-ups also need help to get a sense of reality and seek it in other kinds of fairy tales, perhaps by going to the theater, or to a fancy dress ball, by reading a novel, or taking a journey. From these we get a sense of reality, because they give us romance, perspective and adventure. We may want a new gown, but we don't know what to get because we lack imagination about our own dress. At the theater we see a costume which appeals to us, because it is so presented that it gives us a distinct picture and we come home with what we call an idea for a new gown. What we really have is the feeling that we want to do something for ourselves. And that is what the art of the theater or any other art

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is for, so to present things that we may understand them as a whole, and from them get a vision of something that we ourselves wish to create.

We all need to grow in some way. To forbid fairy tales, reading novels, or dressing up, either to the young or to the old, limits experience, and authority is a poor substitute for experience. Of course, once growth is started no one can tell how far it may go, and uncertainty always makes us feel uncomfortable. Authority saves us from making mistakes, but it does not save us for ourselves. A sense of humor would do more for us because with it begins our sense of values and relative proportions.

Suppose, for instance, we had time and humor to compare various ways of living. In the matter of visiting, for example, let us take the manner of the last century and the present one. We may remember that in the late decades of the nineteenth century, once in just so often our great aunts came to visit our grandmothers, to spend the day with knitting bags and darning. They never "just dropped in" and, as they couldn't telephone, they required a face-to-face, all-day session. Their conversation was mostly a dissection of other people's business, and everyone, tired to death, was relieved to part after supper. They were particularly strong in personal questions and in deciding what other people ought to do. It was an awful ordeal and a day's intrusion into the privacy of other personalities.

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On the other hand, the descendants of these worthy ladies are driven through sheer reaction into ultra-modern entertaining. They keep what might be called a visitors' hotel, where one experiences the actual discomforts of cold, hunger, and loneliness; where the upper housemaid is the only human creature on the horizon; and where, if one's life depended on a piece of string, one could not get up the courage to ask for it. When *café au lait* was modish, we had to have it, though we would sooner drink poison than coffee with boiled milk. Or perhaps our host insisted on making cold, burnt toast on an electric stove.

We must be careful what we want, for we might get it, and what is more exasperating, we might have to keep it. The Greek view of life was moderation, which meant that life was nicely proportioned by good sense and good taste. What we need is determination and purpose, not formulas and finalities. The last art is not a lost art for, as the Irishman said when the pot fell overboard into the sea, "It's not lost for we know where it is." So we know to some extent what the art of living might be, even if we do not all see the truth at the same time.

We live either ahead of time or behind time, but rarely in time. The Egyptian god Osiris died daily and was born again each morning into a new life. It would be good for us if we could get the living value of each moment as we go along, if we could

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get its reality and romance. Then we would get direct experience and we would be shown up to ourselves in a way that nothing else could show us. Our desire for adventure comes through our imagination, it gives us a belief and an outlook for ourselves and our power to express and experience. To be happy we must have a sense of the reality of things, a sureness of touch with our surroundings, which alone grows through experience. The best thing always is to try to get what we want, or, in other words, to realize our visions as we go along. This may prove, perhaps, that we are grist for the mills of the gods who are getting us ready to do another turn in the arena and are molding us nearer to the desire of life.

THE END





























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